

BRABHAM-ALFA F1 DEVELOPMENTS - STRATOS TEST

AUTOSPORT

Saturday's South African Grand Prix preview



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Hesketh Racing lives — with, or without, Lord Alexander. Just four months after the peer signalled its demise, the racing team (admittedly under a revised management) will again grace the Grand Prix circuits of the world starting in South Africa this weekend.



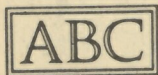
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AUTOSPORT, MARCH 4, 1976

EDITORIAL

THIS weekend sees the start of a fresh British Club Racing season, the beginning of nine months almost uninterrupted motor sport up and down the country.

There are well over 30 commercial championships to be won and the variety of racing is greater than ever before. Among the innovations are the Group 8 open single seater championship and Indylantic at the top of the scale with the Leyland National Mini Challenge and a Formula Ford Novices championship at the lower end. The spectrum is wider than ever before for the spectator while competitors have an even broader choice of classes to suit their varying budgets.

A new series which should create a great deal of media and spectator interest is the Silverstone Jaybrand County League which involves thirteen counties neighbouring the circuit with drivers in various classes trying to score points for their home county. The potential interest in the series is enormous and is an idea which should give the spectator more involvement than the competitor.

This sort of involvement of the spectators, getting away from the 'them and us' feeling predominant in relations in recent years is most important. The plan to allow spectators on to the circuit to look at the leading cars at Brands Hatch this Sunday is another good way of making the spectators feel part of what is going on. We repeat what we said last week at this point — competitors must be prepared to co-operate in these schemes. Ultimately it is for their own good.

For the spectator the new Group 8 series will bring a variety of cars together in one race and current signs point to some very exciting machinery taking part. Indylantic is a new form of racing to this country using existing successful cars, and given the right support early on by everyone concerned could produce a good variation on the normal type of race meeting.

Although the big Camaros have been outlawed from the saloon car scene both the national and club championships have good entries for their opening rounds, which indicates a tough battle for outright honours. It is also pleasing to hear that the RAC British Touring Car Championship has found a sponsor which will be announced next week. A battle royal between the major manufacturers is promised here.

As well as a very full national programme a number of excellent internationals are scheduled. Both the non-championship F1 races, the Race of Champions and Graham Hill International Trophy are being fully supported by FICA and boast excellent entries. Silverstone are also running rounds of the exciting new Silhouette and European G2 championships while Thruxton has a round of the European F2 championship at Easter, which looks like being one of the best ever with renewed British interest. Finally, of course, is the John Player Grand Prix in July which again will be a superb extravaganza of the best in motor sport.

The British spectator is the luckiest in the world — the amount and variety of events during the year is unsurpassed anywhere. The circuit and promoters everywhere have worked hard to make sure that this year is more satisfactory than last in all respects and AUTOSPORT looks forward to the support of the British enthusiasts at the meetings during the year.

our cover picture

One of the strongest challengers to end the Niki Lauda Ferrari Grand Prix domination at Kyalami this weekend must be the Marlboro McLaren team with drivers Jochen Mass (pictured) and Britain's James Hunt.

Photo: Phipps Photographic

SA GP: Lauda's Ferrari almost there

As we closed for press late last Tuesday afternoon, news filtered back from the Goodyear tyre tests taking place at Kyalami that the reigning World Champion, Niki Lauda, was putting in some very fast lappery in his Ferrari.

Well, the Austrian continued to show scintillating form for the rest of the week and it seemed that no matter which (and what) combination the Ferrari engineers put onto his car, Niki had the legs on everyone.

On Wednesday Lauda really started the ball rolling, lapping the 2.55 mile circuit in 1m 15.30s. His car, the regular 312T series, then suffered a breakage when an 8mm bolt on the rear subframe broke. The team grafted on the de Dion rear end and Lauda lapped about 1s slower. The car looked very "bouncy" according to our men on the spot but this didn't surprise Niki who said the system's advantages were primed at getting the power down through slow corners.

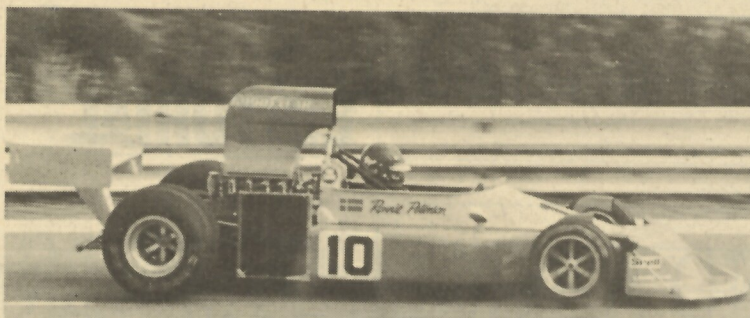
Not far behind Lauda was James Hunt in the McLaren on 1m 15.82s who, like most other teams, were experimenting with the 56 sets of varying compounds and tyre constructions Goodyear had on hand. In the sixteens on that day were Vittorio Brambilla's March (1m 16.05s), John Watson's Penske (1m 16.20s) and Patrick Depailler's Tyrrell (1m 16.98s). Then came Carlos Pace's Brabham-Alfa (1m 17.03s), Ronnie Peterson's March (1m 17.13s), Jacques Laffite's Ligier-Matra (1m 17.18s) and Michel Leclerc's Williams (1m 17.50s).

Rain virtually ruined the following day although the organisers allowed the cars to venture out towards the evening. The circuit dried out enough to allow Watson to get in his quickest lap to date at 1m 16.11s chased by Lauda (1m 16.44s) and Laffite (1m 16.83s).

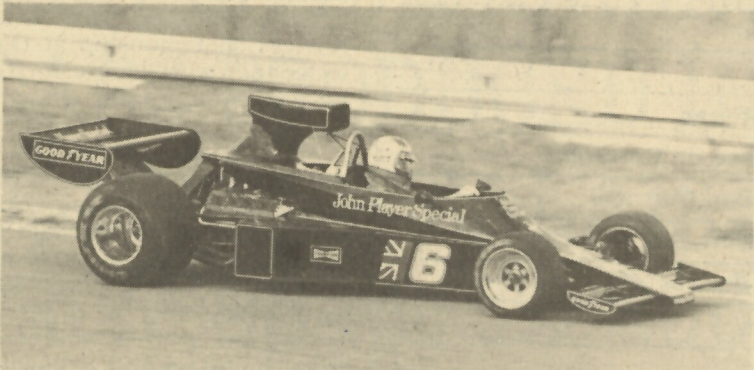
Friday had a lot of people out and once again that Ferrari showed the way with Lauda stopping the unofficial watches on 1m 16.06s. Brambilla again ran well, setting a 1m 16.22s in his own car and a more sedate 1m 18.5s in Peterson's, the Swede having returned to Sweden for a few days. Watson (1m 16.3s), Hunt (1m 16.44s) and Laffite (1m 16.91s) were also well up, although the latter suffered a front wishbone failure (the second we hear) which sent the car skidding into the catch fencing, fortunately without damaging the monocoque. Tying on 1m 17.3s were Pace (the Alfa running pretty well now), Jacky Ickx (having a first outing in the newly built Williams), a perplexed Jochen Mass in the second Marlboro McLaren and Ian Scheckter in his Tyrrell, the local ace having at last cured a fuel leak which had affected his progress during the previous two days.

In a car that had looked extremely unstable earlier in the week, the new John Player-Team Lotus recruits were trying hard, Gunnar Nilsson visably fighting his car through the turns but improving with every day to eventually record 1m 17.7s, 0.2s quicker than Bob Evans. "We're very impressed with Bob," said team manager Peter Warr. "He's very lucid and tells us what's going on. We're very happy with Gunnar too."

Jean-Pierre Jarier also turned out



Super Swedes in South Africa. Ronnie Peterson (top), having foresaken Lotus, was reunited with a March at Kyalami, while Gunnar Nilsson (below) had his first taste of what Ronnie left.



in the Shadow (1m 18.1s) heading the rest who were Emerson Fittipaldi's Copersucar (1m 18.4s), Brett Lunger's Surtees (1m 18.8s) and Leclerc (1m 19.0s).

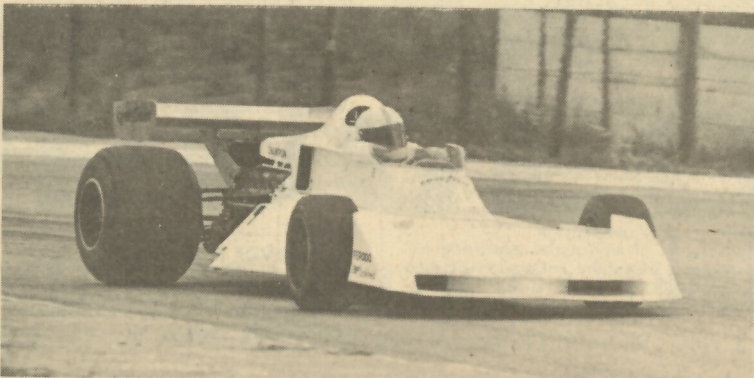
Neither of the really fast men practised on the final Saturday but just to show he meant business as well, Jarier got the Shadow down to 1m 16.24s to end up easily the quickest of the day. Nilsson shaved a further 0.2s off his previous day's time while also just breaking into the seventeens were Depailler and an obviously troubled Fittipaldi. Then

came a gap to Lunger (1m 19.23s), Ickx (1m 19.3s) and Mario Andretti (1m 19.54s), the American having had his revised Parnelli delayed en route in Las Palmas.

Late arrival of the nose piece and the wings further delayed proceedings and an engine failure didn't help. The virgin white car has been tidied up aerodynamically and now looks similar to their DFX-engined USAC car using a Copersucar-type air scoop. Over-heating problems ruined their one and only day's practice.



Michel Leclerc (above) acclimatised himself in the Williams while John Surtees (below) donned his helmet and overalls yet again to give his new car a shake down run.



Chevron's new F5000

Chevron Cars are making no bones about the fact that they've built a brand new ultra-small Formula 5000 car. In fact it's already been tested at the Paul Ricard "about six weeks ago!" However that's all the Bolton company were prepared to say.

That test down at Ricard proved quite interesting as we have subsequently learnt. Also on hand was the development Lola (which we illustrated a fortnight ago) and a similar T400 model. Peter Gethin and Teddy Pilette, from Count van der Straten's VDS Racing Team, were both on hand to drive the cars.

Reports suggest that the Chevron lapped fractionally quicker than the development Lola and both were, in turn, appreciably quicker than the T400. Could this mean that the VDS team, who are competing in America this year, will run a two-make attack with Gethin in the Chevron and Pilette in a Lola?

Walkinshaw in G1 Capri

Apart from his G5 commitments this season driving the Hermetite-sponsored BMW CSL in the World Championship of Makes partnered by John Fitzpatrick, Tom Walkinshaw will be seen in selected rounds of the British Touring Car Championship (which announces an exciting new sponsor next week) driving a Ford Capri II.

Walkinshaw, who last drove a G1 Capri for the works back in 1974, will run this brand new car under the Team Castrol racing with the London Sports Car Centre banner, the Scot still retaining his association with the company having occasionally driven their G1 Escort RS2000 last year for Alan Foster.

The car will be maintained by Bill Shaw in North London (late of Dolomite fame) and will use Racing Services-prepared engines. The first race is at the Race of Champions next week.

Washed out

The Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (better known as CAMS) were forced to abandon the final round of the Rothmans Formula 5000 series at Surfers Paradise last weekend, even though the race had been held over for an extra week because of local flooding.

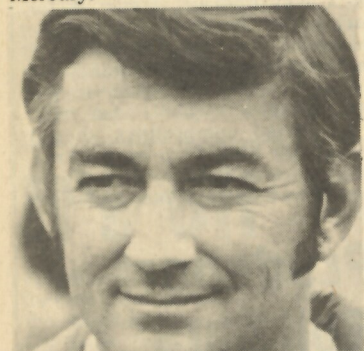
We understand that the circuit still wasn't in a fit enough state to hold the race last Saturday so the event was scrubbed leaving Vern Schuppan as the series winner although New Zealander Ken Smith could take the unofficial title as "Tasman" champion based on the two separately sponsored series.

● A definite entry in the opening Shellsport G8 round as the RAM/Thursdays V6 March 751 driven so successfully last year by Alan Jones. No driver has been announced as yet.

Allison is taken to hospital as Petty wins the Carolina 500

Last Sunday's NASCAR race, the Carolina 500 held at Rockingham, North Carolina in front of 46,000 spectators, was marred by a spectacular eight-car pile up which resulted in Bobby Allison being admitted to hospital with chest injuries. Avoiding the halocaust by a matter of inches, it was Richard Petty who came through to win the event at an average speed of 113.655 mph. This was Petty's fifth Carolina 500 victory, his first win this year and his 178th NASCAR victory in total.

Starting from the 3rd fastest qualifying spot, Petty took his familiar blue and red STP Dodge straight to the fore, the reigning champion then becoming involved in a struggle for supremacy with Allison in the Penske-entered CAM2 Mercury.



Bobby Allison — big shunt.

Starting alongside Petty was his arch-rival and Daytona 500 winner David Pearson in his Purolator Mercury but he was destined for the sidelines before half distance thanks to an oil leak. Another notable retirement was poleman Dave Mar-

cis (Dodge) after 263 laps with a blown engine.

It was usually Petty in front, the Dodge driver leading a total of 362 laps around the 1.017 mile track. Allison also took his turn at leading, spending a total of 72 laps in front. He looked to be in a position to give Petty a run to the final flag before the accident occurred on lap 373.

According to reports, the field was just coming off a cautionary yellow light period when Allison and Cale Yarborough's Chevrolet Chevelle touched. Allison's car flipped several times in a spectacular fashion, landing nose first on top of Richard Childress' Chevelle, before eventually coming to rest on its roof.

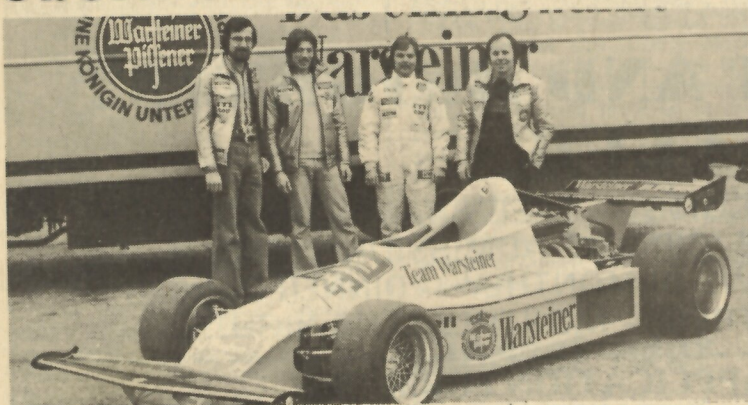
In the ensuing chaos Buddy Baker (Ford Torino) and the Chevilles of Benny Parsons, Coo-Coo Marlin, Terry Bivins and Bruce Hill were all delayed.

Allison was taken from his wreck and admittedly to hospital where he was put into the intensive care unit with unspecified chest injuries. We hear that he remained conscious throughout, has no bones broken and is in a fair condition. Amazingly Yarborough's car had very little damage as did most of the others and, in typical NASCAR fashion, they continued.

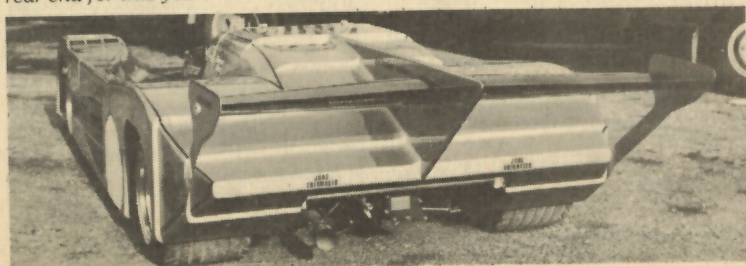
The incident allowed Petty to build up a 2-lap cushion which he maintained until the end, beating Darrell Waltrip's Gatorade Chevelle and Yarborough. Next up, a further 3 laps down was Baker followed at a distance by Parsons while Bobby Isaac's Chevelle completed the top half dozen.

With three rounds of the Grand National series gone, Parsons heads the table from Petty and Pearson.

Obermoser's ToJ attack



Jorg Obermoser (above right) will be running his TOJ cars in both F2 and G6 this year. Keijo Rosberg (above centre) will drive the team's brand new F2 (above) which is the work of Kurt Chabeck, Bruce Rolston and Dieter Baatz. The G6 TOJ (below) which Obermoser will drive, has an attractive re-styled rear end for this year.



Ribeiro's works F2 March

Having considered five other offers to go Formula 2 this year, Alex Ribeiro confirmed last weekend, prior to jetting back to his native Brazil, that he had signed to drive a works March in F2 this season starting officially at Thruxton on April 19. Ribeiro will, of course, be partnering Italian Maurizio Flammini in March Engineering's quest to regain the European F2 title they lost last season to Jacques Laffite and Martini.



Alex Ribeiro — important season.

Ribeiro has brought along two sponsors from Brazil, one old and one new. He will still retain his relationship with Rastro perfumes, this being their fourth year together, while his major sponsor is Caixa Economica Federal, the largest Savings Bank in Brazil.

Among some of their basic aims, Caixa operate two lotteries, the proceeds of which are earmarked for contributions in assistance areas, such as health, education and sport (ie motor sport in this particular case).

Ribeiro has also received some assistance from BMW who, of course, will be providing his engines. The car will be painted white with blue and yellow stripes.

For the opening F2 race at Hockenheim, March will be at full stretch running works cars for Flammini, Ronnie Peterson and Hans Stuck and so Ribeiro will be lent a last year's 752 and run separately just for that one race. Apart from his F2 commitments, the former F3 ace will also be racing saloon cars back in Brazil during the summer.

A good year

The 23rd edition of that most luxurious of motoring annuals, *Automobile Year*, has recently been published in this country. This edition, edited by Douglas Armstrong, is to the same successful format as before with lots of facts and photographs. All branches of international sport are covered in detail. The photography, as always, is the real highlight of the book, there being 325 black and white and 68 colour illustrations, most of them never previously published. *Automobile Year* is published by Patrick Stephens Ltd and costs £11.95.

Lucky Strike for Shadow

The Shadow Formula 1 team will be sponsored by Lucky Strike cigarettes for the South African Grand Prix this weekend. The deal, however, is for this one race only stressed marketing director Dieter Küstner when we spoke to him on Monday.

"We have run a car for Dave Charlton for the last six years in the Grand Prix, and we have, of course, been involved with the race itself for many years. Now we have moved to Formula Atlantic instead of Formula 1 over here as our national Formula we had no car for the race. The tie-up with Shadow is natural as it brings together an all-American racing team with an all-American product. It was natural for us to link the two, although I must stress this is purely for the South African Grand Prix. The other races come under the British American Tobacco franchise and what they do is a matter for them to decide."

The Shadow team were left without a sponsor when UOP pulled out towards the end of last year and there have been countless rumours that unless they find an overall sponsor they won't be able to see the season out, although naturally enough this has been denied by team personnel. However, following some support from BIC in Brazil and now Lucky Strike for South Africa, race by race sponsorship deals should help them through comfortably enough.

New tyre

At Kyalami on Tuesday of this week Goodyear introduced the F1 Constructors and drivers to a new Grand Prix safety tyre which has undergone extensive laboratory testing over the winter and some circuit work last week.

The basic idea of the tyre, of which details are scarce at the moment, is that it has two covers, one inside the other, the inner tyre being of a very flexible construction. The development was brought about following the fatal accident which occurred to Mark Donohue in Austria last year when a front tyre deflated suddenly. The new tyre is for the front wheels only and if the outer cover punctures the inner will keep the tyre inflated.

A similar type of tyre has been used in NASCAR racing but the inner section has been a complete tube.

Carlos Pace tried the new development on the Brabham-Alfa during testing last week and recorded times just one-tenth of a second slower than on the conventional tyres.

If the Constructors do decide to adopt the new tyre they are going to have to let Goodyear design the wheel rims as a special type is required.

At the time of going to press the only official statement from Goodyear on the current tyre situation was: "In addition to the 56 kinds of construction and compounds evaluated at the Kyalami circuit was a tubeless safety shield that was put through its track test for the first time. The tyre system was being evaluated for its performance effect on a Formula 1 car."



The British Racing and Sports Car Club

Brands Walkabout

The BRSCC open the Brands Hatch racing season this Sunday with an open invitation to spectators to meet the drivers and take a close look at a specially selected group of cars on the starting grid in the lunch hour.

The meeting brings the opening rounds of the BBC Radio One Championship, the Townsend Thoresen Formula Ford Championship and the BRSCC Ford Escort Challenge. There's also the special Polydor Records Trophy Race for Ford 2000s.

Racing starts at 2 pm, and BRSCC members are reminded that they have their own free exclusive Members' Enclosure at all BRSCC meetings right next door to the main grandstand. Nearby is the BRSCC membership hut, where you can join the Club and buy all items of Club kit.

East Anglian AGM

Tomorrow evening (Friday) will find BRSCC East Anglian Centre

members gathering for their AGM at The White Hart, Witham, Essex, at 8 pm.

The Centre is desperately keen to revive the local social scene, so why not come along and give your support?

Commentator Norman Greenway has promised to provide some entertainment after the meeting by bringing a couple of "friends" along — and you know what funny friends Norman has!

Race of Champions

The BRSCC major race promotion of the year — the Race of Champions at Brands Hatch on 13/14 March — looks like being a classic event.

Peter Browning is knee deep in Formula 1 entry forms, and the grid for the 40-lap Race of Champions would do justice to a Grand Prix.

The opening round of the British Touring Car Championship boasts a strong entry with many new names and new cars, while the APG Ford 2000 Championship starts well with an oversubscribed grid. The televised Formula Ford race on the Saturday should be worth watching

with most of the top names entered.

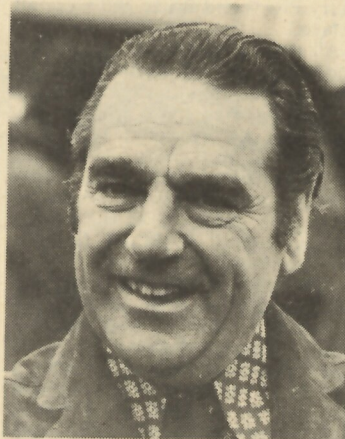
Members are reminded that they can buy advance discount admission tickets for the Race of Champions (and all MCD meetings plus the Grand Prix) through the BRSCC Booking Agency at Empire House. All you have to do is phone Jane Partington with your order; she checks availability with MCD, rings you back with confirmation, and your discount tickets are forwarded upon receipt of your money.

Annual General Meeting

The BRSCC main AGM will be held at 8 pm on Tuesday, 9th March, at The Surrey Tavern, The Oval, Kennington. Don't miss this annual chance to air your views about the Club!

After the formalities the Club President, John Cooper, will be giving a talk, which is bound to be a lot more entertaining than the AGM!

Admission to the AGM has to be by Club membership card.



John Cooper — AGM talk

S-Western Film Show

Main social event for the BRSCC South-Western Centre this month

will be the Annual Film Show at The Half Moon, Coalpit Heath, near Bristol, on Monday, 15 March, at 8 pm.

So far the Club's Film Show programme, which has been on tour around the Centres, has been playing to capacity audiences. The programme includes the 1975 RAC Rally, 1975 Tour of Britain, a Leyland film on the Championship-winning Dolomites, "Hard Driving Man" by Champion, and a special showing of the award-winning ATV documentary on Graham Hill.

On Monday, 8 March, the Welsh BRSCC contingent will be having their monthly Noggin and Natter at The Junction Hotel, Taffs Well, near Cardiff.

Black Flag Formula Ford

Formula Ford competitors should note that the BRSCC have added a race for them at their Brands Hatch Indyland Meeting on 4 April.

This will be one of the novel Black Flag races, where the last competitor on each lap is flagged off and the race is run until only the winner is left. Competitors will receive 50p for each lap completed, and there will be a special consolation award of a framed picture of Pete Wardle to the unlucky chap who is last on the opening lap!

Interested competitors should contact the BRSCC for entry forms. Entries, which will be accepted on a first come first served basis, close on 19 March.

Prodsport Roll Bars

Despite the new RAC Vehicle Regulations requiring all cars to be fitted with FIA Specification roll bars, the BRSCC has been able to get exemption for Production Sports Car competitors to run with a single roll bar with one stay as defined in the 1976 Vehicle regulations for this formula.

This ruling, however, will only apply for the coming season, and all Prodsport cars will have to comply with the full FIA specification in 1977.

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BRSCC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

To: BRSCC, Empire House, Chiswick High Road, London W4 5TW Telephone: 01-995 0345/6/7

I would like to become a BRSCC member. If I am accepted I will abide by the rules of the club.

Name

Address

Phone number, home

office

I enclose remittance of £5.40 being my annual subscription running from the date of joining.

If you require details of the Racing Register please tick in the box. ☐

Signature.....

Date

AS2

\$20m lawsuit pending

The heirs of Mark Donohue, who died following injuries sustained in a practice crash at last year's Austrian Grand Prix, have filed a \$20m damage suit against the Goodyear Tyre and Rubber Company and Bell Helmets. The Penske Corporation, owners of the March car in which Donohue died, was named as a co-defendant in the action, which charges that there were defects in the tyres and helmet Donohue was using at the time.

The suit, filed by David Lawton executor of Donohue's estate, alleges that Donohue told crew members after the crash that a front tyre blew out while he was travelling at about 160 mph. The suit further charges that the tyres did not withstand "reasonably foreseeable stress and strain conditions while racing at high speeds" and that the helmet "failed to adequately and properly protect and guard" him in the crash. The Penske Corporation is charged with failing to provide proper parts for the car.

Leo Mehl, Goodyear's Director of

Racing, said only: "we regret the accident that claimed the life of Mark Donohue, with whom we had a long association. However, we have no evidence that would indicate that the tyres were defective or the cause of the accident."

The American newspaper *Autoweek* quoted Roger Penske as saying: "as of this point, we've received no papers and would have no comment about the specific charges until they have been served... if they are going to be served."

"I'm surprised. I feel it will certainly do the sport definite damage if sponsors and manufacturers are liable in this kind of situation. I'm shocked. I will have to take a look at my own involvement if this is what's going to happen to me, my sponsors, my companies and the people involved."

Jim Coughlin, a Bell Helmets executive, called the action "a total surprise" but declined to comment further until their attorneys had been consulted.

It's off

Spiralling costs is the reason given for the announcement last week that the biennial International Racing Car Show (Speedshow 77) had been cancelled. The show was due to have been held next January.

Originated by the BRSCC in London's Horticultural Halls, the Racing Car Show was an annual event for many years but quickly became too big for its venue and moved to Olympia with the added support of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. Recently it has become a biennial show, but was still regarded as an excellent shop window for the motor racing industry which, of course, has its world headquarters in this country.

The chairman of the Racing Car Show joint committee, Ford's Stuart Turner said the cancellation of the 1977 Olympia event was taken only after the most detailed studies of the economic and other difficulties involved in holding such a specialised exhibition in London in January. "Plans are certainly in hand to stage further Speedshows, which could be affected by the future plans for the Motor Show."

"The last Speedshow in January 1975 provided a first class and most valuable shop window for one of the really exciting and successful facets of the motor industry, but there was a heavy financial loss at the end of the day. Since then the costs of mounting the show at Olympia have doubled. It would be wholly unrealistic to attempt to raise either the charges to exhibitors or to visitors to cover these rises."

"Over the years the Racing Car Show gained a world-wide reputation as the finest anywhere, and contributed substantially to Britain's pre-eminence in the world of motor sport. The time has come for a fresh look at the best way to promote this sector of the industry, perhaps by embracing Speedshow within another of the industry's major shows."

AUTOSIORT, MARCH 4, 1976

Chesterfield back Lunger

Chesterfield, the well known American cigarette brand which is marketed worldwide, has entered into Formula 1 sponsorship and they will sponsor Brett Lunger's Surtees TS19 in a programme of fourteen major races in 1976, starting off in South Africa this weekend.

Don Chmiel, Director of Marketing for Liggett and Myers International, the parent company, said: "Liggett and Myers has been involved with motor racing in the past with great success in North America (with the F5000 series, the CanAm Lolas of Peter Revson and Jackie Stewart and latterly Mark Donohue's Porsche 917 turbo). But this is the first time the International Division has been involved in the Sport at this level. We are very excited about this project and wish Brett and his Surtees every success."

Chesterfield now join the Rand Time Corporation of New York and the Delaware Trust Company as backers of Lunger's first full season in Formula 1.

Richest ever

The BRDC have announced that they have reached an agreement with the F1 Constructors Association to provide a £70,000 prize fund for the Graham Hill International Trophy at Silverstone on April 11. This will make this, the 28th International Trophy, the richest ever (the figure is a £20,000 increase on last year and a £69,000 increase on the first event held in 1948).

In return the constructors are guaranteeing a field of at least 18 cars for the 118-mile race.

Supporting races will be Shell-sport F3s, RAC British Touring Cars, Brush Fusegear FFs and a Tricentrol Clubman's car event.

Brands Hatch takes shape



Competitors at Brands Hatch last weekend found themselves running on the existing circuit and will continue to do so this weekend. Surfacing of the new track began on Monday and if the weather holds for a few days John Webb hopes it will be ready for the Race of Champions.



Miles apart

It looks as if the proposed American Formula Atlantic series, currently being organised by IMSA, may have a sponsor. However the problem at the moment is the shortage of time in being able to get such a championship organised.

Most of the races already scheduled to take place on the smaller American tracks have a geographical hang-up as many of them are due to take place a week after a Canadian Player's round, and some are often as 3,000 miles apart.

It looks, however, that two West Coast circuits (Laguna Seca and Ontario) will certainly get the go ahead to stage events in May.

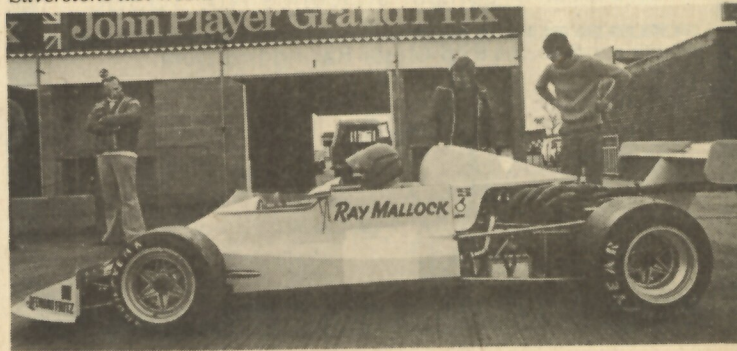
More Formula 3

MRC's Barry Bland said this week that any doubts there may have been about the Monaco F3 race can now be dispelled. The race is definitely on and MRC have all the details.

Another confirmed F3 event is a non-championship Race of the North at Oulton Park on March 27. It will be a 25 lap race and prize money will be similar to a championship round. Further details from BARC (NW) secretary K. Mitchell, 33 Heathfield Road, Birkdale, Southport, Lancs.

● Brett Lunger is rumoured to be rejoining Carl Hogan for a single-car effort in American F5000 races this year.

Watched by Lola's Bob Marston (left) and chief mechanic John Heitman (centre), Ray Mallock began testing the Ardmore Racing F2 Lola-BDX at Silverstone last week.



Sell job

Following three days testing in South Africa last week for the works March Grand Prix team, Ronnie Peterson returned to Sweden along with March's Max Mosley in order to open the Motor 76 show in Malmo.

Commenting on their chances in Formula 1 this year, Mosley was quoted as saying: "the second fastest car and Peterson is a winning combination for this year's World Championship." Talking of what it was costing his company to run Peterson in F1, a figure close to £300,000 was mentioned although "I think there's little chance that they (Ronnie's anonymous Swedish backers) will have to pay" which, to the Swedes, was an open invitation to attract commercial sponsorship.

Mike's back

Dr Joseph Ehrlich will once again be running an F3 car this year. Having bought Ken Silverstone's March at the end of last year he has copied the suspension, incorporating inboard front brakes (probably for the old JPS F3s he bought) and has grafted them on to a new chassis. The new car, designated the ES5/2, will be driven by Antiguan Mike Tyrrell, who is returning to the fray after running out of money early last season. The first race will be on March 14 at Silverstone.

● John Milner-Smith, who usually deals with all the Motor Sport Claims under the Lloyd's Motor Racing, Rally and Motor Cycling Certificates as an Independent Adjuster of Losses, has moved. His new offices are now at 65A Crouch Street, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3EY. Tel: Colchester 64854/5. Telex: 884132.

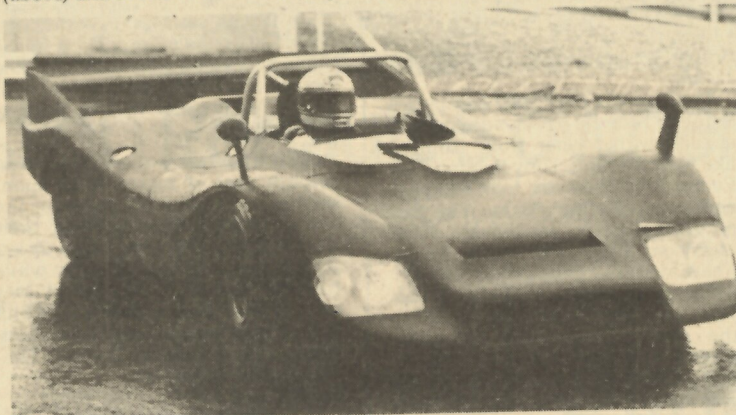
● Four Ralt F3 cars are due to be racing in Sweden this year. Drivers are expected to be Ulf Svensson, Clas Sigurdsson, Hakan Alriksson and Erkki Salminen.

● Don Nichols, patron of AVS Shadow Cars, said in the American press recently that if Mario Andretti should suddenly find himself without a Formula 1 ride, "I'll over extend our programme to put him in a third Shadow at any time during the season."

Deutschland uber alles



After a year's break, Porsche are officially back in competition this season. Seen here in recent testing is their G5 turbo driven by Manfred Schurti (above) and Jochen Mass in the experimental G6 turbo (below).



You've heard about the incredible driving position in the G5 BMWs. Well, here it is.



No Chevron at Thruxton

Because they haven't been able to organise a suitable agreement with any drivers, Chevron Cars have had to withdraw their works entry from the opening Formula 3 race at Thruxton this weekend. We're told that they won't be represented at the Shell F3-opener at Silverstone a week later either.

Originally it had been hoped that Richard Hawkins would drive the car but a subsequent turn of events seemed to favour triple Formula Ford champion Geoff Lees.

Meanwhile in Italy, Pino Trivellato (the Chevron importer) has been giving his newly acquired F3 B34 a run, at Casale and Misano where, with Riccardo Patrese at the wheel, the combination has been under the class lap records at both circuits.

Autosport Year Book

On sale tomorrow (Friday) is a new publication called AUTOSPORT Year Book 1976. Produced by the AUTOSPORT editorial team, this 120 page square-bound book provides a complete guide to the season's sport. Full details can be found in the advertisement on page 12 of this issue: we're biased but we think it's a really useful reference guide with lots of good reading and photographs, and terrific value at only 75p.

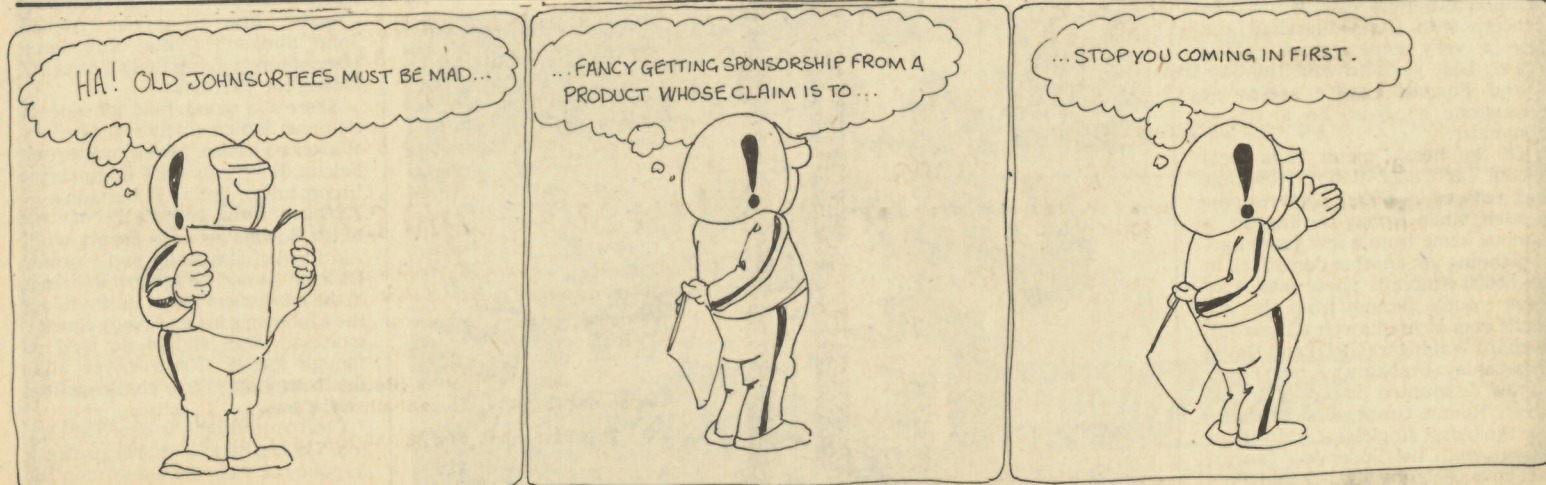
● A last minute entry for the F3 race at Thruxton on Sunday has been made by March Engineering. As to who will drive won't be decided until today (Thursday). Another late entry, only this time in the libre race will be Ray Mallock driving the new Team Ardmore F2 Lola T450.

● Adlards of Brixton, having gone through a difficult period of late, are now back in full swing and are trading once again. They are, of course, South London's only Ford Rallye Sport dealers.

● The GPDA is due to elect their new president at Kyalami this week.

By Barry Foley

CATCHPOLE



All your weekend sport

It's all about to begin again...

The racing season gets underway in earnest this weekend with full national championship meetings at Oulton Park, Thruxton and Brands Hatch while Croft has a full programme of Northern championship rounds and the Saturday Silverstone, although not a promoted meeting, has the opening rounds of the Leyland National Mini Challenge.

OULTON PARK

The Mid-Cheshire MRC is in charge of the season opener at Oulton Park which has five championship events plus a no-points Formula Ford race. The meeting is on Saturday and for those who think that the local Football clubs have a chance of the title, forget it — it's going to QPR so trot along to Oulton Park instead of flogging dead horses.

Highlight of the programme is the opening round of the MCD open single seater championship. This, of course, is a new type of championship racing in Britain and promises to provide some excellent entertainment during the year. As the name implies, it's open to any single seater racing car with an upper engine limit of 5000 cc. That means F1, F2, F5000, Atlantic and so on. The question is will pure power overcome the nimbleness of the smaller-engined cars around the short, twisty British circuits? Nobody knows the answer yet and Saturday could provide a few pointers. The variety is certainly there. Top of the entry is popular saloon car driver Nick Whiting, who'll not only be making his F1 debut, he'll be making his single seater debut too. Nick's the man who prepares delectable Divina's F1 Surtees and he's using this race to shake down the car and to give his team the experience of running the machine. Ranged against him, and on current testing form the favourite to take at least one of the G8 championships this year, is restaurateur and film stuntman Val Musseti. Val's been a racing favourite for some years now and after taking the Brands short circuit record on Boxing Day has been working hard to make this a good season. Watch out for his red Formula 2 March which will use the very latest in Ford F2 engines prepared by John Dunn. John Wingfield too has F2 machinery in the form of one of Ron Tauranac's Ralts. "Wingers" is, of course, partner in the Marshall Wingfield quality car showroom concern with Gerry Marshall and also a very experienced racing driver. Last year he won the Jay-brand Formule Libre series at Silverstone so must be a strong contender.

Of the heavy metal boys local racing car trader Bobby Howlings has entered a F5000 Chevron for himself while Robin Darlington, a famous name from a few years ago, is planning yet another comeback in an F5000 Kincraft. These men may have trouble though from the Atlantic cars of Alo Lawler (Chevron), Richard Wallinger (GRD) and David Winstanley (Brabham). A man never to be discounted is London taxi driver Ronnie Grant, who is probably the oldest single seater driver in Britain with his SuperVee Taurus, but nevertheless still quick and if it's wet he could be in with a real chance.

The weekend is the beginning of nine months' ceaseless racing in Britain and at this point we would ask club secretaries and press officers to keep us informed as regularly as possible with details of meetings and championships. We cannot guarantee to use everything but if we've got the details there's a far greater chance we'll be able to use them.

The Sytner of Nottingham Clubman's championship is purely for the very quick fully modified 1600 cc engined A class cars this year and it promises to be really tough. Former B class aces Nick Adams and Chris Greville Smith are making the step up and could provide a shock to regular front runners like Ruari Gillies, Vernon Davies, Creighton Brown, Peter Cooke and Malcolm Jackson.

The Simoniz over 1000 cc Special Saloon race is over-subscribed already with former front runners like Nick Whiting, Tony Sugden, Jim Evans, Peter Baldwin, John Chappel and Susan Tucker Peake. The SuperVee entry is headed by John Morrison, Peter White and Bruce Venn.

The short circuit, introduced last year, has been further modified at the new corner, now officially known as Fosters, and spectators can view from virtually the whole way around the circuit. Oulton Park is near Tarporley, Cheshire and racing starts at 2 pm.

SILVERSTONE

Also on Saturday the Midland Automobile Club are running a meeting, aimed purely for the competitors, at Silverstone although there are rounds of the Mini 7 and Mini 1000 championships which count towards the Leyland Mini Challenge.

Other races cater for Special Saloons, Modsports, Formula Ford and Libre cars while the programme opens with a high speed trial. Entries are full for nearly all the races.

Silverstone is near Towcester, Northants and racing starts at 1.30 pm.

THRUXTON

Last year's inaugural BP Formula 3 championship produced Gunnar

Nilsson as a major name in motor sport — now, just one year after his first win in the BARC run championship he's taking part in his first Grand Prix this weekend. Will this year's championship, which opens at Thruxton on Sunday, come up with another champion? It's difficult to say just yet but at the moment at least it looks as though Britain may come up with a winner. Heading the entry list is the man who was the sensation of the final 1975 meeting, young Rupert Keegan. He'll have the same BAF March for Sunday's race and if he shows the same form he'll take some catching. Stephen South has been tipped as a man to watch in previous years, following his very promising year in the Formula in 1975 he could just be the man to take a lead this time. Challengers though include former champions from other categories like Mike Young, Chris Barnett and Bob Arnott and former saloon ace Tony Dron in the Unipart Leyland powered car. The foreign challenge comes from Willi Siller's Modus and Patrick Bardinon's Lola.

Forward Trust are entering their seventh year of motor sport sponsorship and have a full entry for the Special Saloon races bearing their name. Martin Birrane and Zekia Redjep head the big car entry while familiar names from the classes include last year's champion Phil Winter, Graham Goode, Andy Holloway, John Homewood, Neil Dineen and David Enderby.

DJM Records are backing the BARC's FF series this year and there are over 60 entries for the first round with Jim Walsh, Rod Bremner, Derek Warwick and Frank Bayes among the regular faces searching for consistent success. The Oceanair Clubman's series is for the increasingly popular FF engined B sport cars and former champion Alex Ferrada and Nick Scott top the entry here. The Modsports race is over-subscribed and hopefully will provide the same superb racing as it did last season. Dave Bettinson's Lotus 7 will be running here and should provide a stern challenge to the E types, Porsches, Midgets and so on. Completing the list of races, which have attracted 220 plus entries, is a Libre race which sees John Wingfield and Ray Mallock getting in some F2 practice.

Thruxton is just 5 miles from Andover, Hants and racing starts at 2 pm.

Nick Whiting will be debuting the Shellsport Surtees which he prepares for Divina Galica at Oulton Park.



BRANDS HATCH

The Brands Hatch programme kicks off with the BRSCC run meeting featuring Radio 1 Production Saloons. The mixture is much the same as last year but, of course, the big Camaros have gone. In the smaller classes we find Wendy Markey in a Lada, Danny Alderton in a Honda, Trevor Moore in an Avenger, Ivan Dutton, Peter Slade, John Brindley (Mazdas) and Ray Tunney in an Escort. In the big race the Capris of Ivan Dutton, Phil Dowsett, Gordon Bruce and Rod Birley take on Derrick Brunt and Simon Watson in BMWs, Tony Lanfranchi's Opel, Bob Saunders' Dolomite and Jon Doolley's Alfa and in class B Gerry Marshall is back in the Hamilton Motors Magnum challenged by Bill Sydenham's Celica and the other Magnums of Nick Whiting and Jeff Allam.

Rad Dougall, David Kemp, Mike Blanchet, Wil Arif, Bobby Scott (the South African champion), Geoff Smailes and Rick Morris lead the Townsend Thoresen FF1600 points opener while in FF2000 the delightful Ann Moore takes on Tiff Needell, Ian Taylor, Richard Piper, Jock Robertson and Bernard Vermilio in the Polydor Trophy race.

The Escort championship begins its season of madness with an entry that includes old hands like David da Costa, Graham Hollis, Geoff Evans, John Waterman, Pete King and Neil McGrath.

The racing will probably still be on the old circuit, but spectators will be able to get their first view of what the revised circuit will look like and remember the caterers have been changed too! Brands is on the main A20 London to Maidstone road, near Fawkham, Kent and the racing starts at 2 pm.

CROFT

The BRSCC (Northern Centre) open the north-eastern racing season at Croft on Sunday with a six-event programme which includes rounds of the Direct Tapes Production Sports, Tate Trophy FF, Troy Tire and Auto Centre Special Saloon and Northern Libre championships as well as Clubman's and Modsports.

The Biba Cosmetics team of Chris Meek (Europa) and Valli (Midget) will provide the focus of attention in the Direct Tapes race in which Chris Alford will be having his first outing in a TVR Vixen. Close competition is promised in the Tate Trophy race with Mick Starkey (ATS Merlyn), Janet MacPherson (J&P Polymers Crossle), Eric Horsefield (Alexis), John Simpson (Nike) and Peter Harrington in Ed Praxel's Lotus 69F among the 45 entries.

There's a good field of Special Saloons which includes Graham Walker's Firenza, Malcolm Stevens' Falcon, Jim Evans' AET Engineering Escort turbo, Jimmy Robertson's 2.3 Avenger, Doug Niven's Escort and Keith Bowmaker's V8 Escort while Alo Lawler, Jim Kelly and Norman Dickson should be in with a chance in the Libre event. John Holroyd tops the Clubman's list and Andy Smith's modsport Elan should do well although former Cobra driver Mike Smith may provide a challenge in a similar car.

Croft Autodrome is near Darlington, Co Durham, and will continue its policy of "help the family man" by allowing accompanied children in for free. Racing begins at 2.45 pm.



"... thinking that anything called 'Inter-Varsity Rally' must involve pubs, darts and women, I agreed that my 'O' level Geography course had left me with a certain cognisance of the products of the Ordnance Survey and I was in."

The Ashby-de-la-Zouch connection . . .

There is always something terribly sad about the last of anything. As a child, a bag of sweets was something to look forward to, but the arrival of that terrible phenomena, 'the last sweet', was an agony that could not be offset by the previous enjoyment of its companions in the bag. I really do hope that the same is not true of this column which I have been writing now for some ten years. The bag of Rally Records is virtually empty and spread before your eyes is the last sticky, fluff-covered remnant. Of course, it is not that the hire purchase company are coming for the typewriter on Saturday or indeed that I have lost the knack of extracting prose from that machine (after all I could always resort to longhand however unpopular it might be with the printing unions), the simple fact is that your poor columnist has finally achieved latter-day respectability and has joined the ranks of the "fully" employed.

The name of the unfortunate employer – should you have missed the odd line that has appeared in the press – is the Royal Automobile Club's *Motor Sport Division*. So far, I have been working there just one month and I have discovered already that not everything is as I expected it. I suppose that I must have imagined a gradual settling in to a respectable desk job with the most exciting thing on the day's schedule being sitting-in on a committee meeting. Well, there are plenty of meetings and sitting in a chair that stays still is a lot different to sitting in a rally car that threatens to go into orbit every other second, but the surprising thing is that the pace of life has not changed very much. And with it, I am called upon to be a semi-expert in branches of motor sport that previously I only knew by their names. The result is that I am now doing more reading *per diem* than I ever managed during the last 15 years. It is not all *Mayfair* and *Penthouse* but then it isn't *Hansard* either and since living in Wiltshire and working in

London means two hours on the train every day, I have that time almost totally uninterrupted for reading. So far the only people affected by the change in my work pattern are the dog, who cannot understand why I am home every morning, the kids who cannot understand why I am at home in the evenings, and the wife who cannot understand what has happened to her peaceful weekends.

One of the saddest things about going to work at the RAC is that I have had to cease rallying. It is unfortunate that one cannot be involved with the administration of the sport and take part as well. Just imagine what would happen if I were to appear before a disciplinary tribunal at the RAC! There is one consolation . . . though I may well have done my last rally in a crash helmet or peering at maps, before the year is out I shall have had plenty to do with rallying, for one of the first jobs I was given by Dean Delamont involves the communication network on the RAC Rally and the organisation of the Bath HQ. On other rallies, I want to see how various aspects of their organisation work, especially in those two most difficult areas, press information and spectator safety. Naturally I cannot spend all my time at the RAC dealing with aspects of rallying but at least I am reassured that I am not divorced totally from the sport that I have enjoyed for 16 years.

I first got interested in rallying while at college. Until my second year, I had been an average student, keen on such erudite subjects such as the specific gravity of various beers, the ballistics of feathered missiles and the complexities of the twin-hook bra. It was on a cold winter's night that the privacy of my room was shattered by the sudden entrance of one Colin McEachran, famous for his exploits in coxing the Isis eight and getting very aggressive when in his cups. The story goes that he once took an axe down from a wall in an attempt to settle an argument but was fortunately restrained by ten of his betters. On this occasion he had no axe that I could see but his wild eyes did reveal some kind of madness and I took up a defensive pose on top of the wardrobe. "Can you read an Ordnance Survey Map?" he blurted out. All was revealed, surely the mad Scot was proposing to row his eight across to Cambridge and wanted me to row stroke with the appropriate map strapped to my toes? No, it turned out that a fine bunch of men calling themselves the Oxford University Motor Drivers Club (to distinguish them from the O.U. Pile-Drivers Club) were one short for a team in the Inter-Varsity Rally. Mr McEachran had agreed to borrow his mother's four door A35 horseless carriage and was now looking for someone to fill the glove pocket with vomit. Knowing little of what the madness in his eye might portend and thinking that anything called 'Inter-Varsity Rally' must involve pubs, darts and women, I agreed that my 'O' level

Geography course had left me with a certain cognisance of the products of the Ordnance Survey and I was in.

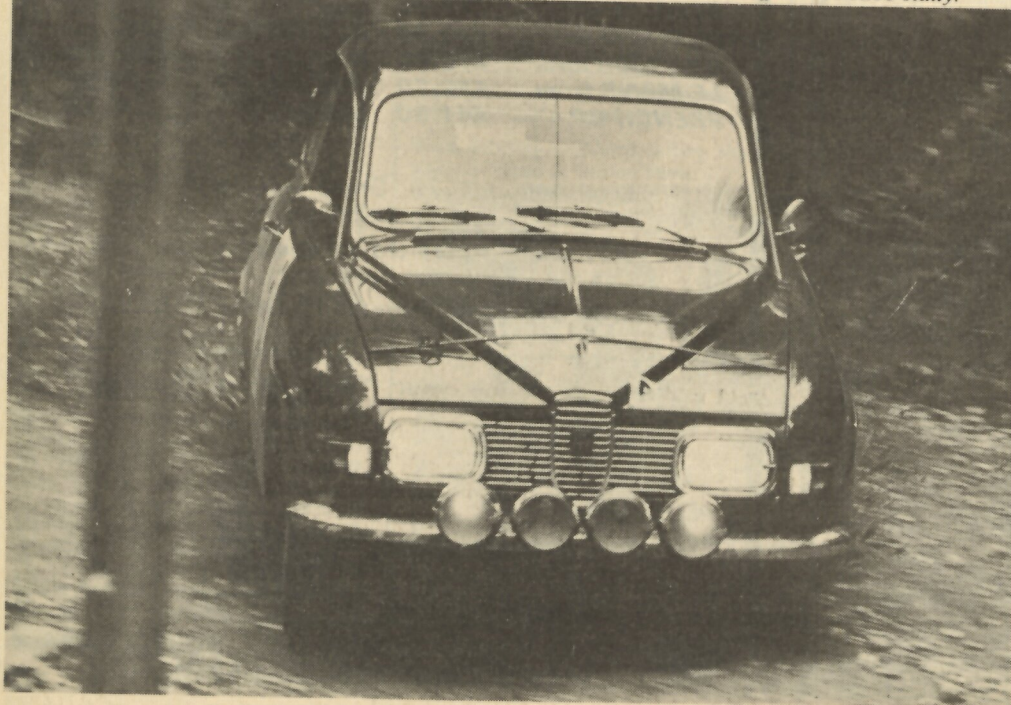
I had no idea what to expect. Our number one team comprised a good friend of mine, Rod Abbott, navigating for Mike Goddard in a Morgan Plus 4 and before we left for the wilds of Derbyshire he told me what to take, like pencils, rubbers, maps, torches and romers. I thought the latter were something to do with gipsies and could not see that it should be so difficult to keep score that one would need more than one pencil. Mrs McEachran's chariot left much to be desired as a rally car but I can only say that through the benefit of hindsight. To me at that time, I was capable of winning no matter what the car, for it had been explained to me that the most important part of the rally was the navigation and since finding one's way around with the aid of a map was dead easy, how could we fail to outstrip the other poor clods?

The rude awakening came shortly after Ashby-de-la-Zouch. An easy run-in on the lines of the Monte Carlo Rally had confirmed in my mind that whatever the shortcomings of the driver and our trusty steed, I was a match for anything that came my way. I had found all three of the A-roads that we had so far used and was already relaxing and thinking about how much time was left to the closing hour. I was disappointed to find that the converging control was not at a suitable establishment and even more troubled that there was not enough time allowed to go and look for one. At the appointed hour, we presented our little equipe at the control; I had noted that cars in front of us had been leaving quite briskly and thus told Colin to prepare himself for something a little more strenuous. I should have known better. At the very instant that I received a piece of paper with a whole lot of hieroglyphics on it that I could not understand, he went speed crazy.

By the time I had sorted out my first ever Tulip diagram, he was well on the way to our first accident. To add a note of poignancy to it, it was my side, something I grew used to in later life. The dry-stone wall, so beloved of Anglophiles, removed most of my side of the car including the door. Fortunately the makers had seen fit to put another spare one just behind it so I moved with the torch, the maps and the errant door to the rear seat from where I performed miracles of the navigator's art. We were completely lost only twice, partly lost 20 times and seriously confused as to our exact location for about six hours. Only the convenient fresh air ventilation prevented my falling asleep and we saved a lot of time at controls by not having to waste time winding down the window which probably accounted for our high placing at 17th out of 19 finishers. What terrible sins those other two had committed to finish behind us I shall never know but I am firmly convinced that they must have been at rest for at least five hours to accumulate bigger penalties than us. Our reward was yet to come for while still in a coma at breakfast – actually in the act of relieving frostbite of the ankle with a plateful of porridge – the results of the team contest were announced and we had won.

So it was on my very first rally that I learnt nearly all the lessons that a rally competitor must learn if he is to succeed. **Never give up;** after our contact with that wall I thought that the only prudent thing to do was find a pub before they did close and I am sure that the innocent owner of that A35 would have agreed with me, but the results proved that our pressing-on was not in vain. **Never worry about non-essentials;** it was to be a few years before I discovered that one did not stop reading the pace notes when the map light failed, or that one kept driving when a tyre went flat, or that one did not turn back because all the money was in the hotel; but I grasped the general principle that doors, boots, bonnets, lights, seat belts, bumpers and wheels can be left behind in moments of stress. **There are certain things which are vital;** like the petrol halt on this blessed rally which I spilt blood finding, as even I could see that A35s do not run for ever with empty petrol tanks, while I cuddled that door for the entire night – not because it kept me warm, but without it the wrath of Mrs McEachran might be brought down upon our heads in the most physical way imaginable. **Cunning can succeed where skill and experience have failed;** on one of our many excursions from the official route when I could not decide where we should be or indeed where we were, we turned

Lights blaze – John Davenport and Simo Lampinen on their way to winning the '68 RAC Rally.



Rally record

off the lights and engine and looked for our fellow competitors, eventually picking them up and trailing them to the next control. One could go on . . . but space forbids.

My next rally was in a superior vehicle, an Alexander Riley 1.5, with a new driver who had competed in many rallies. A quiet man, he belied his surname of Savage and we won the rally with such ease that I was sure that I had now found my forté. I was not to win a rally for another five years during which I investigated every cul-de-sac and farmer's yard in Wales, the Lakes, the South-West and Kent. I went with a variety of drivers including my accountant with whom I evaded more ditches than I did tax returns. I suppose that my first taste of professionalism came with Brian Culcheth who had previously navigated for my accountant and had now blossomed out into a driver in his own right with a Sebring Sprite of his own. To say the least of it, Brian was uncompromising even in those days, and his language when describing some luckless driver that we had caught up was an education in itself. He later told me that he had driven newspaper vans in London and I remembered that they had rubber wings which possibly helps to explain his overtaking technique, which was breathtaking. I contested my first international with Brian which was one of the longer versions of the Tulip Rally and I can never remember being so tired in my entire life.

By this time I was working for *Motoring News* as their rallies editor and chief sub-editor which



Out in the field . . . John just has time for a hurriedly-swilled coffee . . .

meant that I sat all week making sense out of nonsense and then spent all weekend making nonsense out of sense. Actually my navigation was not too bad and though I still persisted in using Ordnance Survey maps for the continental rallies, I started to find my way around quite well. Danny Margulies who had previously used such men as Graham Hill, Stuart Turner and John Brown as his co-driver, took me on the Monte and then the Acropolis. Barrie Williams won the Welsh and then ruined his luck by joining up with me. Though we had a lot of laughs, a class win on the Geneva Rally and then the offer of works drive with the Morgan factory, our taste in birds was too similar and we had to split up.

I finally made my bones as a works co-driver with Vic Elford who persuaded me to join him in the Ford works team for 1966. The rumour that he had to break my arm is exaggerated — and I was getting money for it too. It did mean leaving MN but within a year I had closed a deal with the late, great Gregor Grant and AUTOSPORT had a new rallies editor on a freelance basis which is where this column came in.

Looking on those last ten years, filled as they have been with sleepless nights, cars that didn't behave, roads that didn't behave, typewriters in hotel rooms, a million tons of musak and the occasional shower of champagne, there are so many moments that stand out, it is difficult to choose from them. The contrast of my first RAC



John's first TAP success was with Simo Lampinen on the 1970 event for Lancia.

Rally with Simo Lampinen in 1964 when we almost totally destroyed a Saab 96 on Eppynt and spent the coldest night of my life up on those ranges, with that super year in 1968 when we won with another Saab, 15 minutes ahead of the second car, is a very great one. The RAC Rally is the only classic rally that I ever won though I have been near enough to win both Monte Carlo and Safari to know what the feeling tastes like. The most frequent feeling is the one of anticlimax and frustration that comes from retiring when in the lead, but one has to realise that a professional rally crew retires at least 50 per cent of the time and that, if you are with a competitive driver, you will probably be in the lead at the time.

It was like that three times on the San Remo Rally, with Vic Elford when we are disqualified in 1966, with Sandro Munari when a drive-shaft broke on the Lancia in 1969, and again the same trouble with Lampinen in 1970. It is funny that it is the defeats which spring most readily to mind and the miraculous victories are almost forgotten. Two of the latter category are the Sestriere Rally of 1969 when Munari and I used the Lancia Fulvia to open some of the roads which were blocked by snow, and still made it in time on three impossible sections; and the 1000 Lakes of 1974 when Hannu Mikkola drove his de-braked Escort to victory thanks to Timo Makinen getting caught in a radar trap. Accidents have come aplenty, especially in the early days, like the one with Ove Andersson when we were leading the Polish Rally and going like dingbats in the fog when a missing road sign intended for a braking point on a special stage caused us to loop the loop. By the time that I had reached the mid-point of my rally career, I had stepped out of more than a dozen write-offs and

had evolved a philosophy about being indestructible. The worst thing that ever happened to me as a result of an accident was when we hit that taxi on the Safari in 1970 and I cracked five ribs. The pain was so dreadful that I could not comprehend what had happened; only that I could not breathe. I was sure that I was going to die right there in the bush and said as much to Lampinen but the effort of conversing had got my lungs going again and within three weeks we were recceing the Austrian Alpine . . .

It is always nice to look back at one's career and say what changes you could have made for the better. Personally, I can't think of anything I would like to change. I have been fortunate to rally with some very nice gentlemen with whom I have had some very memorable times. In recent years, there has been a preponderance of Finns among them but that has been for reasons associated with finance rather than through any personal antipathy towards British drivers. I suppose that I would have liked to carry on co-driving, indeed what better title for a film, but I am honest enough to realise that I am not likely to last as well as Kenneth Williams or Sidney James. I am lucky to have found a stimulating job right slap-bang in the middle of the sport where I can make myself useful by stitching the odd word together as well as working on the side of the sport that we all take for granted. For 15 years have been earning my living at rallying and writing about it and now I have a chance to try and do something about helping to make it an even better sport in the future. All I hope is that as I write this there are other young men meeting their Colin McEachrans and proposing to set off for their Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

An exciting ride was provided by Mikkola's 15-inch-wheeled Escort on the '74 Thousand Lakes.



PRIVATE EAR



NICK BRITTAN

The Safari: becoming a technological run-away

Is the East African Safari about to price itself off the world rally map? Ford's Peter Ashcroft announced last week that their planned three-car assault had been aborted in favour of an event in North Africa and one in Spain.

"Places which are more important to our current marketing plan," says Ashcroft. And with new factories opening in Spain and the growing importance of the French market you can believe those reasons. But you must also believe that the costs of the doing the Safari are accelerating faster than Roger Clark away from a stage start.

Ashcroft's original budget to do this year's event had been £35,000. But when it came to the final fine line detail breakdown there was no way he was going to get out of it under £55,000.

Ashcroft had allowed £3,000 a car for preparation. But it's not build and preparation costs that make the Safari an expensive event. Drivers and co-drivers insist on lengthy recce periods. The proposal was that Timo Makinen should spend 31 days there and Roger 40. Then there are the all-important co-drivers as well. And the standard daily "expense and subsistence" allowance is £25 per head per day these expensive days.

But that's only the start of it. On top of the two solid weeks of car-destroying practice there's the not inconsiderable cost of car-to-car and air-to-ground radio links and of course, the now almost mandatory, service aircraft.

These days you'll be lucky to keep a fixed wing craft in the sky for much under £300 an hour and it's very easy to clock up 30-40 flying hours servicing a 4-day event that stretches from the White Highlands to the Indian Ocean coast.

Possible to get away without a service plane? Not these days. Toyota, Datsun and Peugeot all have them scattered about the sky and to do the event without keeping up with the standard of service provided by the opposition is to start off with an inbuilt disadvantage. And the name of the game in rallying is minimising and planning-out the obstacles and disadvantages.

Which was the first manufacturer's team to come in with radio links and service planes? Ashcroft ventured that it was Ford back in 1970. Humph, humph.

Did he feel that he'd hoist himself with his own petard?

"Not really. All events are becoming more expensive to do. We didn't scrub the Safari simply because it was too expensive. I think for the same money we can do a better job elsewhere and cover more marketing areas."

It's what the finance barons call cost-effective-ness.

What about the future of the Safari. "A classic event. A great event," says Ashcroft. "But unless the organisers get a grip of it they may find fewer and fewer European teams coming out to do it. I think they need to look at a scheme which would reduce the amount of practice time allowed and also do away with radios and service planes. It ought to be an event that is won by guts and reliability and not technology."

Leyland's new Chairman "no experience at all"

British Leyland's new Chairman Sir Richard Dobson arrived on the scene last week, not with the charge and style and pizzazz that you would expect of the man elected to be the Saviour of the National Motoring Shambles, but with a dull thud.

He told gathered press men on the day of his appointment that he had... "no experience at all of the motor industry... that he'd put in a couple of days a week at his new job... that he hoped some of the team around him would find it useful to discuss their problems with him even though he didn't know anything about the industry... and that he was to be paid £22,500 a year."

The former cigarette salesman whose entire career has been spent with one company may well be the brilliant, inspiring, marketing whizz kid and leader of men that Leyland needs.

But if he is, he makes a first class job of creating the reverse impression.

Right now he's spending my money, but that's a matter over which I have no control. But it'll be a while before he gets a vote of confidence from me. Or, if his first public appearance is anything to judge by, from his co-directors and more importantly the men on the strike-torn shop floor.

Jim Clark Foundation — an example of questionable value

News filters through the grapevine that there are plans afoot to launch a Graham Hill Memorial Fund. While I would be the first to welcome some sensible and tangible memorial to Graham I am concerned that such a scheme should not simply produce a large sum of money which would be disbursed in the same sad and unproductive, ineffective, manner as the Jo Siffert Advisory Council and the Jim Clark Foundation.

Money for these causes has always been raised on the crest of an emotional wave and as a result people have often given generously, but for the wrong reasons. They have donated because the man concerned meant something to them, oblivious, or even unaware, of what that money will be used for.

We don't know how much money was raised in the wake of Siffert's death or to what use it was put. Louis Stanley, who administers the Council has not, to my knowledge, ever made public any facts or figures.

The Jim Clark Foundation was kicked off with a kitty of what is thought to be in excess of £20,000 and has what administrator Adrian Ball describes as "a modest annual income."

Apart from the occasional very small grant to charitable causes (undisclosed) it confines itself to producing annual research reports.

It's last one on Grand Prix accidents was, frankly, a laugh. It purported to be some sort of actuarial breakdown of accidents in racing. It came up with the sort of stunning statistics that would be of questionable value to the editor of *Tit Bits*.

It drew conclusions like... the majority of serious accidents happen when racing cars leave the track... Italian racing drivers are statistically more accident prone than all others... and a whole rash of so-called research data that would not have surprised or educated the average 13 year old. About the only fatuous conclusion that it failed to reach was that the majority of motor racing accidents happened at weekends.

I will be among the first to subscribe generously to a Hill fund, as will no doubt many AUTOSPORT readers. But only on the condition that the fund makes quite clear beforehand what is to be done with the money.

I'll not support operations which degenerate into an annual brain racking session resulting in a weak public relations exercise, which usually does little more than offend the intelligence of those who subscribed.

In twenty years' time I don't want to remember Graham because someone burns a piece of Nomex and writes a report or because someone writes a tedious tome on how to make motor cycles safer. I've been conned that way before.

Build me a drivers and mechanics changing room at Brands and Silverstone with a bronze bust of Graham at the entrance and call it the Graham Hill Pavilion. Or build a section at Tom Wheatcroft's Donington museum devoted to Graham. Almost anything in preference to some annual ceremony orchestrated by a bunch of people who have long forgotten, or maybe never knew, why the subscribers gave in the first place.

Ridicule and disrepute at Scarborough Fair

Three years ago on the Grand Prix scene the drivers and the constructors, collectively and individually, blew an exhaust note of change through the world's race organisers. They told them how they wanted the tracks rebuilt and altered, what time of day the races would start and when the practice periods would be. In short they altered the balance of power. Organisers no longer put on gentlemanly events and invite selected drivers and teams to participate; they now stage events according to a specification laid down by the drivers and constructors.

As it happens it works out well. Reason? Because in general terms organisers are a bunch of amateurs who get together to do their thing once a year and the drivers and constructors are pros doing their thing professionally 365 days a year.

Is the same thing about to happen in the field of International rallying?

Judging by the performance on the recent Mintex International Rally there's a wave of driver-co-driver-inspired anarchy which is redolent of the GP scene of three years ago. Simply organisers and Stewards being batted into the background and told to do their job in a way that will satisfy a small handful of top drivers and their mates.

Pressure applied by drivers caused the organisers to first publish the results, then declare them void and publish a revised set, and then after five hours of deliberation and argument cancel two of the stages around which the pressure and controversy arose and finally publish yet another set of results.

The basic problem was that Dawson and Marriott in the Stratos accepted a wrong time on one stage. Their bad luck and bad management.

Looking into the problem revealed certain "dubious marks and signatures" on the Russell Brookes/John Brown card. Humph, humph.

Then the intelligent, but often cantankerous, Brown for whatever reason, failed to get a time on his card for the last stage. The organisers were then forced to cancel this stage as well.

After an awful lot of foot shuffling by the organisers and Stewards and a weak-kneed effort on their part to disguise the whole chaotic shambles with a statement about the "splendid sporting gesture by Brookes" the issue was resolved to a yawning, depleted and by now largely disinterested group of pressmen and hangers-on.

As it happens the best man won. Dawson and Marriott who had made the running were declared the winners.

But surely the real winners were that little band of overbearing drivers and co-drivers who had manipulated the organisers like a Scarborough Fair Punch and Judy show.

Question. Should one castigate the drivers and co-drivers, who by definition are professional loop-holders, or should one censure the organisers?

No doubt in my mind. Organisers are there to do just that. To organise, to administer the rules and to mete out judgment. But most of all to run the event according to their own rule book.

They failed. And in doing so they brought the sport into ridicule and disrepute. The De Lacy Club and the Stewards were made to look like a bunch of indecisive school girls.

Somewhere, someone should be asking the question; do we need people like this running International Championship rallies?

"Female type" persons

...household names

May I through your excellent magazine comment upon Ian Phillips' *Editorial* in last week's issue.

Whilst agreeing in principle, I think that the comments, although unfortunately true in too many ways, regarding club drivers being unable to promote themselves are somewhat out of context with the Galica-Moore promotion recently announced. Both these personable young ladies are, in their own right, virtually household names, not due to motor racing but through their own particular sporting activities in the past. This in itself guarantees media interest and the fact that they are female type persons certainly does not detract from this either.

The average club driver, besides working from 9-5, will find it very difficult to attract any interest from radio or national media without being able to work at this nearly full time and at the same time have a string of successful results without which he is not media material. Perhaps he could arrange to go to prison for a time and send Catchpole suitable material or budget for one really demon shunt, carefully planned in front of cameras or national news photographers. How about an invitation to suitable media outlets to attend Paddock Bend at 3.25 pm on March 7, where they will see something to their advantage? Seriously though, I speak from a reasonable amount of experience gained during last season, in attempting to promote my business, Tony Dixon in his Elden, and our sponsors Scarlets Night Club. It takes a considerable amount of time and expense, to reach the various media without in the main any tangible results — hands up all those who have written X amount of letters to potential sponsors and not even had the courtesy of a reply.

In conclusion I would like to agree with John Webb's comments (perhaps disagreeing might be more advantageous?) in the national media recently regarding promotable drivers in this country.

The situation is quite frankly appalling, drivers, of any possible ability for the future, being counted on the fingers of one hand and of these none are exactly a sponsor's dream — except perhaps one clubman's driver and the other an Irishman, so he doesn't count! Why not set up a teach-in for interested parties so that they could learn some of the aspects of promotion work. I'm sure Damien Magee would be only too pleased to run a school of this kind!

To finally end my ramblings, why not organise a drivers' "driver of the year," the lucky person then being assisted in every way possible, Grovewood money, percentage of gate money, etc. The way it looks at the moment in five years' time we may not even have a competitive British driver in Formula 1, and that, gentle persons, is what it is all about.

PETER WILLIAMS

CATERHAM AUTO ACCESSORIES CENTRE,
CATERHAM, SURREY

Racefill to the rescue

In reply to your *Editorial* comments in AUTOSPORT of February 26, regarding apathy among club drivers, and the closure of the BRDA, I would comment that, having joined the BRDA during 1975, I received a membership card, sticker and badge. Since joining I have heard no word as to the club's activities, no notification of meetings or activities, etc. So as an ordinary club driver I can hardly be classed as apathetic if having joined a club no information is forthcoming.

No doubt if I was World Tiddlywinks Champion, somebody might promote me and give me a Ford Escort to drive round Brands Hatch for the summer, however, as a Mr Nobody my name in front of the British Public means nothing.

However, the MCD idea of Racefile sounds an excellent idea and I would be only too pleased to fill in their questionnaire and return it, so that my name, when successful, can be put before the general public.

MAIDENHEAD, BERKS

S. WATNEY

Good value for money

Like many other enthusiasts, I was rather dismayed at the five pound basic entry fee for the Grand Prix, and even after your reassuring "value for money" *Editorial* of February 12, still can't really see value in two production car events, one of them another pathetic celebrity parade, and a ninety minute (if we're lucky) Grand Prix.

If last year's race is any indication, it is easy to see why the FICA is frightened of competition from other categories, for after the best drivers in the world had all crashed at less than 50 mph we were treated to an excellently entertaining Atlantic race. If Formula 1 races become any more catastrophic or any shorter, Bernie Ecclestone will surely have the Brands Hatch catering points or the Silverstone 100's made out-of-bounds for the duration of the Grand Prix.

But, I suppose, value like beauty is entirely in the eye of the beholder.

PUTTENHAM, SURREY.

ANDREW PHILLIPS

My original idea but Congratulations Mr Jowitt

I would like to congratulate Peter Jowitt (AUTOSPORT Feb 5) on winning the AP Safety Award for his ideas of catch fencing, the fencing which we initiated at Zandvoort in 1953 and which I have used in all the circuit-designs I've done since 1956. For years I have advocated the use of three or more fences in front of any guard rails ("killer barriers") and the drawing on the same page, showing fences and rail on a corner is exactly what I have been putting in my designs and tried to bring about at Zandvoort as soon as the lethal rails were forced on us. On one point I beg to differ on: never in at least 20 years' use of wire-mesh fencing has it acted as a launching pad; never have we had drivers wounded by "flying poles" and the danger of trapping the driver has occurred only once or twice but, of course, offers no danger at all. The crash which disrupts the car or splits the fuel tank never occurs with wire-mesh fencing, because there is never an impact as with guardrails (I consider these the greatest fire-hazards ever, and we only began to have real fires after the killer-barriers were introduced).

Peter Jowitt may have referred to certain cases where poles flew about, but I am quite sure that in these cases the wire-mesh fencing was put up the wrong way; without the three aluminium wires at the back of the netting and without all netting firmly attached to poles and aluminium wires. If the mesh is simply put on poles then of course poles fly about and cars get wrapped up. The worst instance was Silverstone in the rain. Of course the netting did a great job because it stopped cars gradually but it was put up completely wrong. I have published the right method widely and when I gave a lecture last April in Toronto as one of the panel of experts on safety in motor racing, invited there by the Motor Racing Safety Society, I again gave the right method how to put up wire mesh fencing. But nobody ever bothered to inquire and to ask us precisely how we did it! The most shocking fencing was put up and indeed if the rules are not followed the fence may roll itself around the car. With our method (tried for the first time in 1952, one year after I founded the Association Internationale de Circuits Permanents) the fence hangs together in long stretches left and right of the impact, cannot work loose and is dragged along with the car but it cannot cut loose or roll up or anything.

This does not detract from my congratulations to Mr Jowitt as his ideas show clearly that we in Zandvoort (and in the AICP) have been on the right road for over 20 years, and if my instructions to use this fencing in my designs for Suzuka, Zolder, Jarama, Nivelles, Oakland, Eugene and other circuit designs, which I have done in the past 16 years, have been disregarded or over-ruled, that does not detract from the fact that I did prescribe them and their correct structure in my original designs.

BENTVELD, HOLLAND

JOHN HUGENHOLTZ

Just get on with the driving

As a motor racing devotee for many years, it appears that I have, for some time now, been under the mistaken impression that it is a driver's job to go to a given circuit and attempt to drive round the available tarmac in the shortest possible time, in conjunction with other drivers attempting to do the same.

For several months it has appeared that your editorial staff have not been content with drivers' efforts along these lines only. Quote: "If you are so promotable and can speak up for yourselves, why haven't we heard you on the radio and read about you in the national papers?" Unquote. Answer. A driver's job is to drive; his aim is to enjoy himself, win races if possible and try to line his pocket to some degree to offset the massive personal expenditure involved in racing. What more should John Homewood, Nick Whiting, Gerry Marshall, the late Tony Brise, Ronnie Peterson and all the others have to do than go all out to try and win races? This is what the public pays to see.

If a driver wants to gain instant stardom, massive publicity and, unfortunately, the butt of countless jokes, there is one easy, or maybe not so easy, step — *change sex*. The only reason Lombardi, Galica and now Moore receive the publicity they do, is that their christian names are Lella, Divina and Ann. If Miss Lombardi and Miss Galica had been men — how much publicity would their results have had so far? Fair enough Lella Lombardi in both F5000 and F1 kept the car on the island where others didn't, and Divina Galica cannot be faulted for her courage — 1 in 3 sheet ice at 80 mph on a couple of planks; but have their efforts been worthy of their publicity? Please phone March Engineering for one answer.

Don't misunderstand me, I would dearly like to see Divina et al. do well, consistently, in races. It is an achievement, whatever sex you are, and the benefits of good women drivers in racing are obvious. But, beware the old advertising adage any publicity is good publicity. March and sponsors, with the first lady F1 driver, got their fair share of coverage, but with the consistently slowest driver on the track; M.C.D. and Shellsport got theirs with the snowbird, but the press certainly enjoyed her first shunts. Which way Ann Moore? (As a matter of interest, I thought FF2000 was for the cream of FF1600 drivers, trying to progress in something quicker). The question that has to be answered is does this kind of publicity which, fair enough, puts racing in the public eye, do the sport any actual good?

Quote: "The reason we have no more than a handful of promotionable (?) people in British racing is because the majority are totally apathetic" Unquote. Wrong. The majority are there to race. If the circuits want more revenue, speaking as a spectator and a competitor to be — build proper facilities, advertise the races to a greater degree and advertise championships and championship standings. It would also be a good idea to sort out how many championships are actually necessary in the various formulae.

Great improvements are being made in driver promotion, such as start and finish line interviews and now Racefile — but remember — the fact that someone is a fast driver does not necessarily qualify him as an eloquent and amusing speaker. The driver does the dangerous bit that people come to see and all they get is higher bills and criticism. If the motoring press and the circuits want motor racing to flourish — you try promoting the drivers, the teams, the masses of different machinery. You all benefit directly from the show that they stage. (And I do realise that AUTOSPORT goes further along these lines than the rest).

Remember, to the public at large, racing cars go round and round, getting nowhere and covering a lot of miles in the process, using fuel and having accidents. How the hell is a racing driver supposed to promote himself when he does that? Aesthetically racing is a very purist sport, but a lot of apparent glamour surrounds the top echelons. It is not just the pages of your venerable magazine but the publicity staff of the circuits that ought to be turned, to a greater degree, to what is a difficult problem. A problem that shouldn't be lumped on the drivers' shoulders with words like "Go and promote yourselves". Drivers are primarily drivers, let the promoters do their job.

SEVENOAKS, KENT.

R. G. R. LANCASTER-GAYE

Surtees statistics

I always turn rapidly to read the superb articles emanating from the pen of Nick Brittan, in his column *Private Ear*. However, I thought his comments on Team Surtees' past record somewhat puzzling. Surely his remarks about the team only scoring "World Championship Points on only two occasions" couldn't be right? I could personally remember five races I'd seen myself where Big John's cars came in the first six. Five minutes of checking my records unearthed not two, not even five, but 16 occasions when Team Surtees cars finished "in the points".

I can only surmise that the "two occasions" Nick Brittan refers to are the only two races he's seen, or is he suffering from brain-fade?

BLACKBURN, LANCs

ROBIN WILKINSON

No challenge...

It's getting silly, isn't it? Not so long ago the best Grand Prix drivers were rated by their performances at circuits like Spa, Silverstone and, above all, the Nürburgring.

I don't believe Spa really had to go. It needed some changes, probably, but the biggest argument against it, the fact that it could be dry on one part of the circuit but raining heavily without warning on another part, could have been overcome. Drivers and marshals could have co-operated to utilize the oil flag additionally as a rain warning, for instance, and as for slicks in the rain — well, slicks are a bloody unnecessary evil anyway and should never have been allowed by the FIA.

Enough has been said about Silverstone's chicane, but I can't let the passing of the proper Nürburgring happen without comment.

As a driver, the essence of racing is the challenge it presents. I don't see why the Grand Prix drivers should think differently, but I think they've forgotten why they're there. Can you see people discussing 20 years from now how Everso Biggiballs blew them all off at Hockenheim or Paul Ricard the way people still talk about Fangio at the 'Ring in 1957? I can't, and I think spectators will stay away if current trends to reduce racing to a uniform, sanitary and artificial level carry on. After all, it needs great circuits to bring out great drivers, and it's great drivers the public pays to see.

Another thing: like many other drivers, I have certain ambitions. Today's clique of talented but totally self-interested Grand Prix drivers have no right to deprive any of us of the chance to someday race a Grand Prix car round the 'Ring.

There's too much politics in racing: let's see a little more genuine racing for racing's sake (and the paying spectators') while we continue to promote the sport as professionally as possible.

CROYDON, SURREY

MIKE BLANCHET

A lesson from NASCAR

May I congratulate your magazine in conjunction with Page and Moy on organising such a splendid trip to the Daytona 500. May I also use your columns to congratulate NASCAR on providing a motor sport scene from which we in Europe could learn a lot. The whole theme appears based on entertainment and involvement, summed up by the thousands of flags and banners in the town saying 'Welcome Race Fans.' I had expected to find a grid of 50 Gerry Marshalls and results based on brute force. Instead I found a field of drivers with respect for their cars and the dangers of their incredible speeds, immaculately prepared cars housing engines capable of 11/10ths after 480 miles, jet propelled pit crews and an enormous element of luck. All this controlled by a set of rules which rarely allowed anyone to command a lead of more than three car lengths. How many Formula 1 races can report 36 lead changes. The result was first class entertainment and the reward a crowd of football size proportions (seemingly without the hooligan content we suffer). In situ one could only admire their resolve not to race in the rain, the plan was to attract with driving skills, not accident potential.

What was particularly impressive was the presence throughout race week of the leading drivers and their cars in the shopping precincts

and on garage forecourts, even on race days, signing autographs and supporting their sponsors. Has anyone come across Lauda or Lombardi outside Marks and Spencer on race day? Seventy five per cent of the crowd wore clothing supporting one team or other, Woolco carried three counters of race goodies as did most other stores and took large advertisements promoting the items. Local radio based whole programmes on teams and again drivers themselves out to help. NASCAR proved that motor sport can achieve the mass popularity we are all working so hard to achieve here.

One final word of thanks to Goodyear who made us all temporary members of their motor sport club enabling us to meet the drivers, visit the paddock and wear their hats as protection in a 81° temperature. Silverstone will never be the same again.

FAREHAM, HANTS.

JEAN DENTON

Scrupulous stewards

As one of those directly involved, I must come to the defence of the Stewards of the Mintex Rally. Contrary to the suggestion in Peter Newton's report, they dealt with two difficult protests in a courteous and effective way. A Clerk of the Course can, and indeed should, make swift, decisive decisions, using his own judgement as fairly as he can; but Stewards sit as a court of appeal, and have a duty to hear all the evidence and weigh it up carefully. Bob Tennant-Reid and his two colleagues did this admirably, as I know Russell Brookes, Andy Dawson and Andy Marriott agree.

Another journal has mentioned my name in such a way as to suggest that I might have been the person referred to in your reference to "browbeating at Oliver's Mount." This is not true; the finish timekeeper was preoccupied by the presence of other co-drivers as our car crossed the finish line (with me inside, needless to say), and failed to record our time; she was therefore reluctantly obliged to write "No time recorded" on my time card. The Stratos finished the stage before us, and she was already trying to give Andy Dawson a time of 5.06, which was far too slow, and which certainly did not agree with Andy Marriott's stop-watch time of 4.23, which I saw and which was almost identical to my own. The good lady was in fact simply writing down arrival times haphazardly on a piece of scrap paper, rather than making any sort of list, so it is not surprising that she got confused. She was quickly overrun by excited, dissatisfied co-drivers who hardly helped, but the whole incident was sparked off by a lack of timekeeping organisation, not by browbeating by anyone. Cancellation of the stage becomes inevitable under these circumstances.

The cancellation of SS3, Cottam, should have been done as soon as the organisers received formal enquiry slips requesting this from a large number of competitors. This list included ourselves, Pentti Airikkala, Chris Sclater, Colin Malkin, Ronnie McCartney, Gavin Waugh, Billy Coleman and Tony Fall. Only the most intransigent of organisers could fail to realise at once from this list that conditions genuinely made this stage a lottery. Groping about an airfield in thick fog looking for arrows in any case has no place in deciding the results of an International rally.

(Incidentally, we did not lose time here through fuel-pump failure, it packed up at SS5, Rufforth, but needed no more time-consuming remedy than flicking the switch to bring in the spare, without dropping below about 90 m.p.h.).

Of course, the marshal at SS26 Cropton 3, made the classic timekeeping error of reading 14.13.58 as 14.14.58, the minute hand already being into the 14 by the time he came to read the clock. Andrew Marriott failed to notice this, and may never have got the error corrected had I not got my correct time (also 14.14.58) off the marshal, who then had second thoughts and started to change it until I protested. He nevertheless did record our time as 14.15.58 on his check sheet, which led to the Clerk of the Course making the curious error, not of correcting Andy's time when we testified that it must be a minute out, but of trying to impose an extra minute on us, too — and then, despite protestations, of publishing these as official provisional results, necessitating official protests, complete with £50 fee, by Andy and ourselves.

The problem of inexperienced timekeepers may merely have led to the swift cancellation of a couple of stages had the organisers stuck to the adage "When in genuine doubt, scrub it out." As it was, using the rallying ethics of yesteryear, they failed to deal promptly and fairly with anomalies, and so created the situation which left such a nasty taste in the mouth. Indeed, only the scrupulous, careful and fair work of the Stewards enabled the organisers to declare results which were a true reflection of drivers' performances; had the organisers had their way, the results would have been a joke, created by the inadequacies of timekeepers and others, and the furore that much greater.

There were many really good things about the Mintex, and one strength of the De Lacy Motor Club is that their event does each year show a willingness to learn and improve. Let's hope this will be once again true, and that the problems of 1976 (but not the lessons) will be quickly forgotten.

LEIGH, WORCS.

JOHN BROWN

Training day thanks

I should like to express my sincere thanks to all concerned with the British Motor Racing Marshals Club National Training Day, held on February 21 at Silverstone.

In all, 176 marshals were trained in the various aspects of marshaling by a total of 59 instructors and lecturers.

A polished performance by Jim Russell Racing Drivers School provided the circuit part of the course and I should like to thank all the drivers and mechanics and, of course, the JRRDS.

Thanks also to the Roger Williamson Fund for their donation towards the cost of running the event.

Finally my thanks to Silverstone Circuit for their help and the Silverstone Club staff who worked hard to help keep the cold out.

WEYBRIDGE, SURREY

DAVE SCOTT

(National Training Officer, BMRMC)

Super system

May I through your AUTOSPORT columns, suggest to all your readers and especially Mr P. H. Rutter (Correspondence Feb 19) that his idea of a drivers/sponsor dateline system is an excellent idea.

I am wholeheartedly behind the needed expansion of British drivers in all spheres of motor racing. With the era of £££'s-Drive still with us this service would I'm sure enable both up and coming drivers and beginners to continue his or her activities where without backing yet another British potential would bite the tarmac.

I live in the West Country at present, and would willingly do groundwork for the proposed system, such as approaching organisations and feeding the information back.

This service if nurtured, is a positive and useful step towards fostering the sport at a time most crucial for healthy growth.

PLYMOUTH, DEVON

C. J. CORDREY

Three cheers

First cheer for printing Michael Dunlop's letter "Racers Ideology." We, too, deplore the "snide remarks by so many journalists about Fittipaldi. From the spectators' point of view, not only is he the supreme driver, he is also supremely nice to the common-garden pit fanatic!

Second cheer for advertising and pre-viewing the Donington Speed Show. It was fantastic! I came "face to face" with my first great love and my last one: photographs of Bernd Rosemeyer and Emerson Fittipaldi. We are looking forward to many a re-visit of Donington and would like to thank Mr Wheatcroft for his tremendous — and we hope ever-more successful — achievement. (Where did he dig that beautiful Mercedes up from?)

Third — and loudest — cheer for the double-page on Wilson, Emerson and the Copersucar Fittipaldi. Great! You've got your priorities right again.

(NAME AND ADDRESS
WITHHELD BY REQUEST)

Coleman to drive tarmac RS again for Ford's "Circuit" bid

Latest Circuit of Ireland news is that Billy Coleman, who is of course starting at number one, will be driving the ex-Roger Clark Monte Carlo RS1800 tarmac Escort in which he so successfully destroyed the opposition in Galway recently. It seems unlikely that official works participation can be expected, despite the obvious gap now left by the cancellation of Safari plans, owing primarily to the sheer work load now being imposed at Boreham, with the necessity of having to build a new car for Roger while maintaining vaulting customer demand. The Coleman-Ford agreement was apparently made some time before Galway and involved the Circuit of

Ireland. The car will again be run in Thomas Motors colours.

Other leading entries include of course the Chequered Flag Stratos for Walfridsson and the 3-litre Porsche for Curley, while Skoda have entered their new 130RS coupé for John Haugland which should put the cat among the pigeons in the 1300 class. Other entries so far include Russell Brookes, the Samsons; David Lindsay with his works spec RS1800; Will Sparrow and Jim McRae from DTV, the former possibly with a new 'tarmac' Magnum, and locals include David Agnew, Noel Smith, John McAlorum and Brian Nelson.

Late entries are open up until March 19 from the UAC.



Bernard Darniche won easily with his familiar and well-used Chardonnet sponsored Stratos.

Neige et Glace to Darniche

Of the eighty starters, forty-eight competitors finished the twenty-third Neige et Glace last weekend, headed from start to finish by Bernard Darniche, co-driven by Alain Mahe, in the Lancia Stratos used for the Monte last month.

The title of the rally was hardly appropriate this year, there being no snow on the roads and only fairly rare patches of ice, plus the usual assistance round blind corners by a few drama-seeking spectators armed

with snow shovels.

Local man Saby finished second after Darniche, followed by Michel Alibelli, both in Alpine A110s. No foreigners took part and indeed the whole entry was mainly composed of Savoyards or Dauphinois. Christine Dacremont from Vence, a late entry seeded at 16 in a group 2 Autobianchi, won the Coupe des Dames. The main difficulty for competitors was probably tyre choice. Individual divergence of opinion was very

Now a Polski "NO" to Safari

Polski Fiat became the second manufacturer within a week to cancel plans to compete on the East African Safari Rally. Following Ford's shock announcement not to send a team of three cars, promised at the Press Conference in January, Polski Fiat announced that their

team of two cars would not enter either. It seems that money must be a substantial reason for the withdrawal of both teams, although the political situation must not be ruled out. In the case of Polski Fiat it seems that they can pursue a substantial programme of European events for the cost of a single Safari.



Andruet - a complete recovery.

Andruet's back

Today (Thursday) sees the return to competition of Jean Claude Andruet in the Lyons-Charbonnieres rally at the wheel of his 2-litre Alfetta GT following his complete recovery from injuries sustained in a nasty accident while driving an Alpine on the Monte Carlo Rally. The car has been entered by SOFAR and should provide some much needed opposition to the domination of Darniche's Chardonnet-entered Lancia Stratos in French national rallying at present. AUTOSPORT will be carrying a report of the rally next week.

evident at the start, the variety ranging almost from "slicks" through half-studded "knobbles" to most unsuitable narrow un-studded "Hakkas."

The itinerary followed the usual modern pattern of lapping a rather short mountain circuit several times. Increasing road closure difficulties outside the area of persuasion of an organising club automatically dictate that the itinerary must be restricted to their local cols. Although this eases the cost of pace-noting and practice for the competitor from a distance, it also gives the advantage to the local club-man, who can learn the route by heart by practising each weekend or evening.

Wide racing tyres were used by most crews in the unseasonal dry conditions. Pictured here is local man, Saby, who brought his Alpine A110 to second position.



..new plans include a Lancia Stratos

The Polski team leader goes to Italy shortly to collect his cars for 1976: for himself a Stratos which he hopes to use first time on the Lugano Rally, and for his team one or more 131 Abarth Rallies. His final rally in the 124 Abarth is expected to be Firestone. The 131 is being produced in Poland, although the Stratos will obviously be more in the nature of a prestige car than a production vehicle. Apart from his Polish drivers, Jussi Kynsilehto is included in team plans: for him the 1000 Lakes is obviously the most important event this year. Although he still has an Escort, converted into an RS1800 after his accident last year by Haynes of Maidstone, his plans to use the 131 for the 1000 Lakes with various other events before then in order to become used to the car. Co-driver for the 1000 Lakes and possibly other events beforehand will again be Martin Holmes.

Hankirally..

Entry details for the Hankirally, the European championship winter rally based at Helsinki, were recently announced. The top drivers are as follows: 1, Simo Lampinen (Saab); 2, Hannu Mikkola (Toyota Levin); 3, John Haugland (Skoda); 4, Ulf Grunholm (Ascona); 5, Tapio Rainio (Saab); 6, John Taylor (Escort); 7, Neikki Enomaa (BMW); 8, Leo Kinnunen (Volvo 66); 9, Timo Salonen (Datsun Violet); 10, Jari Vilkas (Saab); 11, Pentti Airikkala (Escort); 12, Timo Makela (Sunbeam Imp); 13, Makkola Saari (Skoda); 14, Lindquist (BMW); 15, Vatanen (Ford Escort); 16, Antero Laine (Saab).

80 entries have been received in all. Other interesting entries are as follows: 25, Pauli Toivonen (Simca); 28, Matti Johansson (Escort); 31, Henri Toivonen (Simca); 32, Jussi Kynsilehto (Polski Fiat 125); 34, Kyosti Hamalainen (Avenger). The start is 1801 hours 7th March and finish is morning 9th March.

Portuguese..

Principal entries for the third round of the World Championship for Makes, the Rally of Portugal which takes place in just under a week's time include two Lancia Stratos for Munari and Lele Pinto; two Opel Kadetts for Rohrl and Kullang; two Toyotas for Andersson and Mikkola and an Alpine for Jean Ragnotti.

The rally starts on Thursday March 11, at 09.00 from Estoril Autodrome.

CASTROL/AUTOSPORT

Donegal: awards for all stages

Regulations for the classic Circuit of Donegal, round five of the Castrol AUTOSPORT championship should be available by March 17th. There is now a £7,500 prize fund for this tremendous pace note event, and there is also the added bonus of £10 to the winner of each of the 40 stages. It seems that this bonus may be doubled if current sponsorship negotiations be forthcoming.

Lang is voted "Rally Person"

"Why don't I know this fellow?" was one prominent journalist's comment at the end of the first day of the Mintex International. He was referring to a young 20-year-old Australian named David Lang who had finished the day at 13th overall from a start number of 74, had risen as high as seventh overall during the day, and had it not been for the diabolical weather conditions effecting later runners that Friday, would almost undoubtedly have maintained his high position. David's stage times during the most part of the day, (besides those last few hours when the stages were severely affected by fog as an added hazard to darkness nor later runners), compared favourably with some of the fastest drivers in the country and it was for this reason that he has been selected as Ford's Rally "Person" of the Month.



David Lang — no sponsor.

No result..

To give the award to someone who has not actually achieved a result may be seen to be questionable, but while commending another fine performance from Graham Elsmore and noting Chris Sclater's determined return to the small elite of front runners, it was felt that David's efforts to keep his ageing car on terms, despite the condition of the stages which were not a little cut up by the time he tackled them, and the problems created by fog and darkness when he suddenly found that leading cars were taking as much as 30 seconds a stage out of him), merited the accolade.

David arrived in England at the beginning of last year with accumulated savings from work in the outback on cattle stations, intent to make a name for himself in rallying. His previous rallying amounted primarily to experience in Australian nationals in an old Datsun 510. Via Boreham, David Sutton, Graham Lepley and his rapidly dwindling bag of gold, Lang got himself equipped with a car, but most of his outings last year (and there were only five in total), were, when he was not off the road, fraught with mechanical disaster. His biggest problem with the car has been a chronic shortage of brakes and the Mintex drive proved no exception.

No car..

Last Tuesday he received what might prove a major setback to his very tenuous rally career in this country, for Lang's financial resources have been exhausted and his car — or any competitive car — needs a sponsor to keep going at the head of the field. David, however, is a resourceful as well as determined

character and one feels he will be back to get that elusive result which his speed always implies. He knows that the 'off' on Saturday was totally avoidable and it happened purely as a result of him chancing his arm in the fog so as to keep in touch with the leaders. It was a gamble which he felt he had to take, and unfortunately it did not pay off. David lost about 25 minutes bogged down having chosen a "place where there weren't any trees."

Now the future looks bleak to say the least, for he neither has a car not much money to alter the situation. It is to be hoped that someone will give David the chance to get that result of which he is so obviously capable. He is a very quick driver and one feels that the offs are now in the past. Hopefully this need not be said of his rallying as well for as he says, "I honestly think that you'll never go quickly unless you start off by going quickly."

The David Sutton side of affairs is quite straightforward. The Avon/Castrol budget is committed to Pentti Airikkala and Jill Robinson; and Sutton, stressing his desire to run David Lang should a sponsor become available, reaffirmed that a car would be available should a suitable financial settlement be reached.

We hear that two previous deals involving Lang have fallen through at the last minute. For the time being therefore, Sutton has recommended that Lang's old car be sold, but he hopes to be running Lang in the Castrol championship in one of his very competitive spare cars. Meanwhile Jill's next outing will apparently be at the wheel of a 2-litre BDA engined Escort rather than the G2/4 RS2000 which she has been using recently.

"Triple Crown" selectors are chosen

Selectors of the four national rally teams competing for the new Triple Crown rally championship, have been appointed by the RAC Rallies Committee.

Major Bob Tennant Reid will make the choice for Scotland, Davie Mitchell for Ireland, Jim Porter for England, and Denis Cardell together with Colin Francis, for Wales.

Each team will consist of four crews, but only the three best scores will count towards the championship.

The five rounds of the contest are all international events. They are the circuit of Ireland, the Welsh International, the International Scottish, the Manx and the Lombard-RAC International Rally of Great Britain.

ESSO BTRDA GOLD STAR — ROUND 2

Dukeries — an all-night spectacular

The national Dukeries Rally, round two of the BTRDA championship, takes place on Sunday. This year however there have been some fundamental changes and for the first time, part of the event will be run at night which gives competitors that much extra in the way of an experience which is becoming increasingly rare in British stage nationals.

The route is largely similar to last year with two visits to the Clipstone forest complex and map 120 being made most use of. The event is co-sponsored by the Mansfield and Sutton Observer and Esso with added help from Ashfield District Council and it will thus be based at Sutton in Ashfield's Idlewells Centre where the first car leaves for the Clipstone area at one minute past midnight for the first of 21 stages. Tony Drummond, who won with consummate ease last year, is back again to try for his hat-trick. He will again be accompanied by his sponsor, Derek Carman, who had an initiation to the sport on this event last year when he co-drove with Tony for the first time.

The entry is a very strong one and the 120 vacancies were filled in almost record time. The route involves crews in an immediate visit to Sherwood and Clipstone before a series of private road and airfield tests occupy the remaining hours until breakfast. First car is expected at Blyth's Blue Star Services around 05.00 on Sunday morning and the daylight stages involve another visit to the forests around 08.00. The finale of the rally will once again be the Kings Mill spectator stage at 10.00. The best spectator access to Clipstone is off the A614 Nottingham to Ollerton Road, and Kings Mill

access is by a route off the Mansfield to Sutton road.

Scrutineering for the event will be at Pye's Garage, Sutton Road, Mansfield on Saturday evening where a full programme will be available (supplement in the Observer). This can also be obtained at the start and at spectator stages listed below. Post rally festivities will be held in the Devonshire Suite of the Idlewells Centre where results should be finalised during lunch. First car is expected back there at 10.30.

The entry is impressive with many of the country's principal clubmen heavily involved, and besides the top ten listed below, other principal runners include Frank Pierson (RS1800) at 12, Mike Rawson's Stockhill Garages Kadett at 13; and Dick Beeby at 16. Also entered are Del Lines' Porsche Carrera at 16; the Hartford Motors Escort TC for Charles Eveson at 18 and Welshman David Grainger at 14. **The top ten are as follows:** 1, Tony Drummond/Derek Carman (Escort RS); 2, George Beever/Stuart France (RS1600); 3, Piggy Thompson/Mike Nicholson (Porsche Carrera); 4, Graham Lepley/Malcolm Harvey (RS1800); 5, Randolph Whittall-Williams/Roger Hemmings (Escort RS); 6, Robin Farrington/Geoff Hignett (Escort RS); 7, David Stokes/Bill Andrews (Escort RS); 8, Dick Rollett/Neil Turvey (Escort RS); 9, Pip Dale/Richard Stark (Magnum); 10, Reg Mullenger/Ian Roberts (Escort RS).

Current positions in the BTRDA Gold Star championship after the first round, the Gwynedd, are as follows: Terry Brown 15; David Stokes 14; Geoff Simpson 13; Ian Hughes 12; Roland Young 11 and John Lloyd 10.

Tony Drummond — hat-trick?



George Beever — still with an old car.



Spectating guide

CLIPSTONE FOREST		Start	Finish*	Time
First visit	1	577601	587610	0035
	2	600613	602613	0040
	3	593621	629620	0055
Second visit	4	587610	577601	0815
	5	600613	602613	0825
	6	629620	593621	0835

The following points are also recommended:

622635	598622	614608
624606	586597	613610

Please note:

Beware of new, unlit barriers across entrances to forest.

No parking on road between 587610 and 629620.

If parking between Crown Farm Crossroads and 587610, park on north side of road only to leave clear access for emergency vehicles.

KING'S MILL		Start	Finish*	Time
		519597	515598	0935

Please note:

No parking between King's Mill Garage and the stage start.

* SPECTATING NOT PERMITTED BETWEEN FLYING FINISH AND STOP LINE.

All map references refer to Ordnance Survey metric 1:50,000 map 120. Times given are approx 15 minutes before the first car is due.



Scoring a comfortable win, the Meissner/Vassiliou Mercedes 280C, suffered no problems.

Mercedes win in Kuwait

The second Rothmans Kuwait International Rally, run on 26/27 February, was the first special stage rally to be run in that country. With a tough desert route including 270kms of stages the rally was international not only in terms of competitors but also in its organisation, with Dave Richards being initially responsible for the route, but later taking over the majority of the organisation of the rally when its original organisers failed to come up to expectations; and Jack Kemsley, acting as chief steward.

The rally was also the first International to use the British Rally time digital clocks, which proved a great success and eliminated any timing queries, even in the hands of the keen but inexperienced marshals.

Rallying is virtually unknown in Kuwait, and a varied selection of cars was entered, including two immaculately prepared Mercedes 280s, several Volvos, the usual selection of Japanese cars, and even a Plymouth Barracuda, the owner of which had spent several hundred pounds on preparation.

The first day's route, 50km to the North of Kuwait city, contained six stages and took its toll of the relatively standard cars, most of which were running on normal road tyres, as rally tyres are virtually unobtainable. Eleven of the 40 starters retired, all with mechanical failures, and the leader after this section was the Works-built Renault 17TS of Gerard and Frederique

First Kuwaiti driver into second position was Towik Wazan, who impressed.



Cathcart scores on Hellfire

Last weekend the second round of the Eire Rally Championship, the Hellfire Rally, was won by Roy Cathcart/Derek Smyth in his now re-shelled and immaculate car. The rally was a 16-stage all-tarmac event run in the midlands area and boasting about 100 miles of stages. This was Roy's fourth ever rally (partly because of strong parental objection) although last year he was fourth on the Longford and leading the Circuit of Wicklow when he was forced to retire. Chief challenger to Cathcart's Ford domination was Gerry Buckley but he was sidelined by an assault on a rock which burst a tyre and bent the back axle.

Into second place therefore, and consolidating his position in the

New look "Scottish" economies

ASRs for the International Scottish Rally have been available now for the past few weeks and most prospective competitors will no doubt be aware that the rally promises to have a changed character. Taking place from Thursday June 3 to Monday the 7th, the rally is forsaking the Highlands for the fishing port and some-time resort of Ayr on the South-West coast of Scotland. Again sponsored by Lombard North Central, the rally is reformed in many ways (not that we thought it needed any sobering-up) and the route has been severely butchered in efforts to keep costs down. No longer is the rally a grand tour of the Highlands with special stages thrown in. No longer will crews, retired or still active, have the benefit of pure

northern air and a gargantuan selection of malt whiskies between their daily bouts of action in the forests. Instead, the rally is going to an attractive, but somewhat industrial part of the coast line many miles south of its previous second-section venue. Commenting on the change of style, organiser of the rally, Bob Tennant Reid said:

"Motor sport has always been expensive but events of the past few years have resulted in enormous cost increases for competitors and we felt the time was ripe to take a whole new look at the International Scottish Rally and build an event where the real action can be condensed into a tighter area without too much extra mileage. As a result we have come up with a route which saves much public road driving but permits us to increase the Special Stage mileage so that there will be keener competition off the public highway for competitors. This is very important in an event which has a large entry from private enthusiasts as opposed to works supported or fully sponsored drivers."

Glaswegian invasion

Although Ayr is principally renowned as being the host town for a sizeable number of Glaswegians — who invade this port during their fortnight's trade holiday — when it swells the town's coffers considerably as the Glaswegians are prone to spend their money in a frenzy of marauding, drinking, escapades. We are told, on good authority, not to worry unduly. A wide range of accommodation is available and the rally should certainly succeed in avoiding unnecessary expense. Those who will suffer are the "Scottish" regulars who look forward to the rally as a holiday.

The Royal Scottish Automobile Club have received a great deal of co-operation from the local town authorities as well as from the whole of the Kyle and Carrick District. In this way the route has been arranged with considerable emphasis on forests in the south of Scotland and in the Cowal peninsula. By moving the event forward by two days and starting on Friday morning, June 4, more of the competitive parts of the rally will be accessible to spectators over the weekend and the final sections of the rally will be on the overnight stint, Sunday/Monday, June 6/7.

Competitive tension

On the evening before the start, Thursday, June 3, there will be Autotests on Ice at Ayr Ice Rink with invited drivers taking part in identical cars and on Friday and Saturday nights there will be overnight stops in Ayr before the final punishing sections beginning Sunday morning at 10.00 am and ending 24 hours later back in Ayr so maintaining competitive tension right up to the very last moment.

As can be easily ascertained, the competitive aspects of the event are still there — improved if anything — only the apres rally activity is likely to be below previous standards. It's what the "Scottish" was famous for. Rationalisation has its price....

championship came Sean Campbell in his Northern Excavators/Lindsay Cars G1 RS2000 in which he is always so very quick, while Ron Neely managed to get his Tuborg supported Mini to the finish in third position. Phillip McCartan was fourth in Tony Pond's ex-Tour of Britain RS2000. More bad luck for John Tansey, who having despaired of ever persuading his 3-litre Carrera to work properly, had reverted to a 2.7 litre version. The unfortunate result was that the flywheel fell off. Cathcart ended the day quickest on all but two of the 16 stages.

1, R. Cathcart/D. Smyth (RS1600) 301 penalties; 2, S. Campbell/P. Phelan (RS2000) 372.

civilisation for help.

The final results showed victory for European cars, with Mercedes first and third, BMW second and Volvos fifth and sixth, although the Honda Civic team took the team award. Expatriate Richard Martin-Hurst took a class win in his Datsun 160, one of only two cars running on Dunlop MS tyres.

The rally showed what potential exists in this area for real all-out motoring on rugged roads, and with the continued support of Rothmans it could well become a classic test of car and driver.

Kuwait International Rothmans Rally

1. K. Meissner/P. Vassiliou (Mercedes Benz 280 C).
2. T. Wazan/G. Arthur (BMW 2002).
3. T. Kreigner/H. Schmidt (Mercedes Benz 220).

Chieftain regs.

Regulations are now available for the Avon Tyres Chieftain Rally, the Bath MC organised event on Salisbury Plain. The event will both start and finish at Amesbury on Easter Sunday April 18th. There will be 20 stages over a variety of surfaces and regs can be obtained from P. Cozens esq; "Latimer," The Street, Hullavington, Wiltshire. Telephone Hullavington 350. Entries close on April 8th. Total stage mileage is about 50 with a route of 150 miles and the restricted event has capacity for some 140 cars.



The Alpine S is an impressive looking car with modern styling and generous luggage space.

A competitive newcomer

The Simca 1100, and its high-performance 'Special' version of 1294cc, have earned a good reputation over the years. With transverse engines and front-wheel drive, these are notably refined cars with excellent suspension, while their performance is outstanding, having regard to engine size.

It was therefore a logical step for Chrysler to build a larger-bodied car of the same general design, when they wanted to go up-market. In the case of the 'S' model, an extra 8mm has been added to the stroke, giving a capacity of 1442, and this, in conjunction with a twin-choke Weber carburettor, results in a useful 85 bhp. The body is entirely new, with four doors and a hatch-back giving a 'semi-estate' configuration. Independent suspension of all four wheels is by wishbones and torsion bars in front, as on previous Simcas, but the trailing arms at the rear have coil springs in the case of the new car. There are anti-roll bars at both ends.

When I drove this car in France, it was called a Simca 1308, but here it rejoices under the name of Alpine. This I find very confusing as an Alpine means a Renault to me, which shows how ignorant I am, I suppose.

The Alpine S is an impressive-looking car with modern styling. The luggage space is generous and the rear seat can be folded to carry really bulky objects, which makes this versatile saloon an ideal vehicle for those living in the country. On the other hand, the combined leg room of the front and rear seats might be a little greater in such a large car. The interior furnishing is attractively carried out and the instrument panel is excellent, with separate dials that are legible day or night.

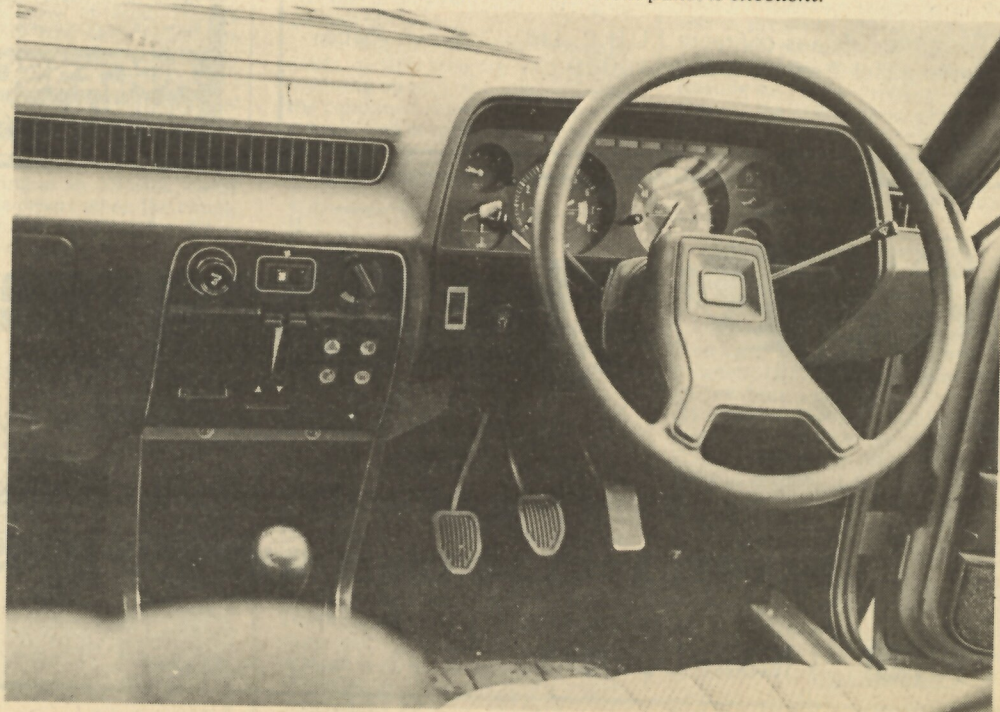
Comfortable seats, front and rear, are easily entered through the four doors, while the

occupants have a good all-round view. The engine starts quickly from cold and warms up without stalling if the choke is released gradually. Once

warm, the car feels distinctly lively, and although it prefers the gearlever to be used, it pulls well on top gear and is quite flexible. The excellent gearchange assists the driver when maximum acceleration is required and the moderate weight allows the efficient engine to provide an impressive performance.

The Alpine S is a genuine 100 mph car, reaching that considerable speed in a reasonably short

Interior furnishing is attractively carried out and the instrument panel is excellent.



Road test

distance, which is highly satisfactory.

Though the engine is obviously revving hard, it will not, in fact, reach the red part of the rev-counter dial on top gear, even when driven downhill on full throttle.

In spite of its more modern appearance and luxurious appointments, the Alpine S is not so refined as the Simca 1100. The engine gets really noisy at high revs, so that I felt uncomfortable when using the lot during acceleration tests — I normally kept 500 rpm in hand. Unfortunately, the noise level is still high enough to be annoying at 70 to 80 mph, which is a useful cruising speed. Its surprising that such a moderate increase in the stroke should have quite so noticeable an effect and a little more development might make a vast difference.

The ride is rather choppy and uneven at town speeds, but smoothes out admirably on the open road. There's some road noise and bump-thump too, plus wind noise at high speeds. As the Simca 1100 reaches higher standards in these respects, there seems no reason why the Alpine S should not be greatly improved, and I would like to try it again next year when it is not quite so new.

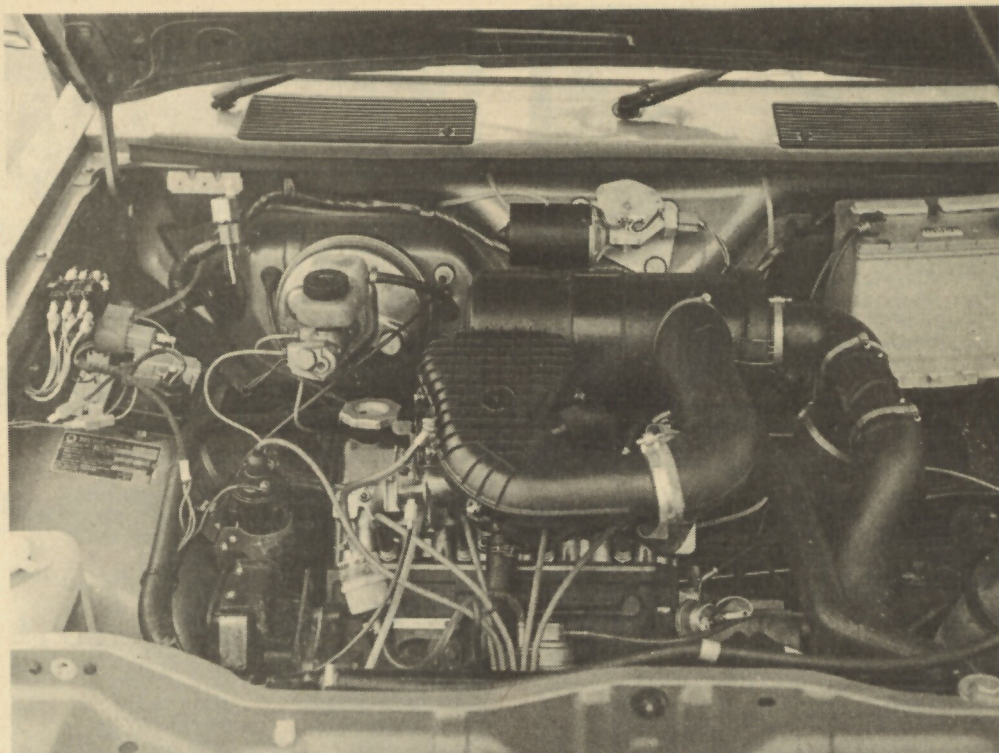
There is the usual excellent front-drive stability in side winds. The car is well balanced on corners, without too much roll, the understeer only becoming strong on really sharp bends. The steering is fairly low-geared and feels rather unresponsive at first, but is actually quite pleasant after one is used to it. The brakes are well up to the performance and weight of the car, giving no sign of fading during hard driving on winding roads.

The heating and ventilation are vigorous and ram effect alone is sufficient, even down to quite low speeds. The big rectangular headlights, which are such a styling feature, are well up to modern standards without being exceptionally powerful. The unusual matt finish of the bumpers looks more practical than the customary shiny surface and is probably more resistant to corrosion. The steel shell has an extremely thorough anti-rust treatment before painting, we are told.

Perhaps one of the best features of the car is its fuel economy. Any reasonably careful owner is likely to average something in the region of 30 mpg, which is an excellent figure for such a large and impressive machine. With a petrol tank holding over 13 gallons, fuel stops will be few and far between.

In a period of industrial unrest and financial uncertainty, it is good to see that Chrysler International can produce such a competitive car

Matt finish of the bumpers looks more practical than the customary shiny surface.



Increased capacity, to 1442 cc and Weber carburettor results in a useful 85 bhp.



through French and English collaboration. It is at the top of its class for speed and acceleration and it gets low marks for refinement at the moment that is surely something which could respond to treatment. I might be accused of being too critical but at the price of the Alpine S I am surely entitled to be. In any case, this car will sell on its impressive appearance combined with petrol economy, which are the main priorities of many buyers.

SPECIFICATION AND PERFORMANCE DATA

Car Tested: Chrysler Alpine S 4-door saloon, price £2,375 including car tax and VAT.

Engine: Four-cylinder 76.7 x 78 mm (1442 cc). Compression ratio 9.5 to 1. 85 bhp DIN at 5600 rpm. Pushrod-operated overhead valves. Weber twin-choke carburettors.

Transmission: Single dry plate clutch. 4-speed synchromes gearbox with central remote control, ratios 1.080, 1.524, 2.31 and 3.906 to 1. Helical spur gear final drive, ratio 3.706 to 1.

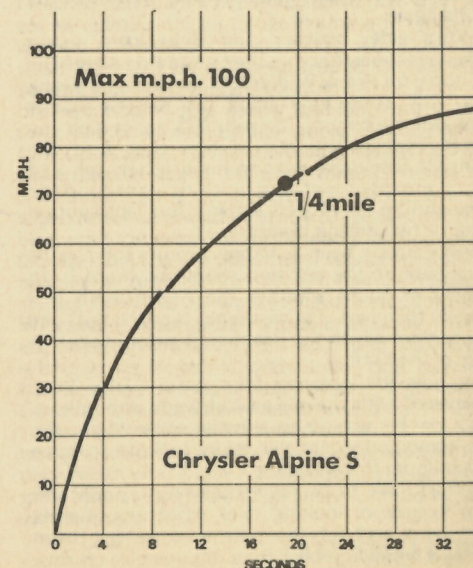
Chassis: Combined steel body and chassis. Independent front suspension by wishbones, torsion bars, and anti-roll bar. Rack and pinion steering. Independent rear suspension by trailing arms, coil springs, and anti-roll bar. Servo-assisted dual-circuit disc/drum brakes. Bolt-on steel disc wheels, fitted 155 SR 13 tyres.

Equipment: 12-volt lighting and starting. Speedometer. Rev-counter. Oil pressure, water temperature and fuel gauges. Clock. 2-speed wipers with heated rear window. Heating, demisting, air ventilation system with hazard warning. Reversing lights. Indicators with hazard warning. Reversing lights.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 8ft 6.5in. Track 4ft 6.8in/4ft 7.8in. Overall length 13ft 11in. Width 5ft 6in. Weight 19 cwt 3 qrs.

Performance: Maximum speed 100 mph. Speeds in gears. Third 7 mph, second 50 mph, first 30 mph. Standing quarter-mile 19.1. Acceleration 0-30 mph 3.8s, 0-50 mph 8.8s, 0-60 mph 12.9. 0-80 mph 24.1s.

Fuel consumption: 27 to 31 mpg.



South African Grand Prix — preview



World Championship
Round 2

For six continuous days last week the shrill sound of racing engines could be heard reverberating toward the outskirts of Johannesburg. The Grand Prix was coming, a race that until a few weeks ago looked likely never to happen until its financial predicament was rescued by a local wealthy businessman.

Six weeks will have passed since the opening round of the 1976 World Drivers Championship got underway in the steamy heat of Brazil. This weekend's South African Grand Prix, which takes place yet again at the traditional Kyalami circuit nestling in the suburbs of Johannesburg, sees the start of the season in earnest. From South Africa the Formula 1 circus returns to Europe and then rushes off towards the west coast of North America a week or so later. There will be no let up from now onward.

Judging by the form he showed in Brazil and the more recent news of how he's dominated the pre-race unofficial practice throughout the past week, the reigning World Champion Niki Lauda, again driving his Ferrari 312T, looks an odds-on favourite to win his third Grand Prix on the trot (he won the final race last year in the USA) and thereby extend his hopes of becoming the first man to win the championship two years running; a feat last achieved by Jack Brabham in 1959 and 1960.

The South African Grand Prix is regarded by the locals as very much a major sporting occasion. Unlike other sports, it has never been affected by racial apartheid and never looks likely to be.

Last year's race was won by local hero Jody Scheckter and it proved to be a tremendously popular victory. It would ask a lot from him to do it again this year but you never can tell. The Elf Tyrrell team have found Kyalami quite a successful hunting ground. You must remember that although neither Scheckter nor Patrick Depailler's 007 series cars seemed suited to inter-laps, they both finished in the points and the Frenchman obtained second place. The latter has shown good speed in the recent week of Goodyear tyre tests and, bearing in mind where he finished in this race last year, Depailler may well be in the points again.

Jody's elder brother, Ian Scheckter, again makes a reappearance on the Grand Prix scene (he last drove for Frank Williams in Sweden last year), only this time he's back in his ex-works Lexington-sponsored Tyrrell 007 in which he proved conclusively last season that he's the country's best driver next to his brother. Ian and this car are capable of very quick times around the track and he could well show a few hot-shots a thing or two during practice.

Kyalami has been a happy circuit for Carlos Reutemann in the last two years but there is an element of doubt whether the Argentinian will actually take part this weekend. It surrounds the Alfa engines which the Brabham team now run in place of the Ford.

Anyhow Reutemann's team-mate Carlos Pace persevered with the car all last week and will no doubt try his utmost to salvage self-respect, the new combination not yet really looking to have the potential to win races.

Ferrari have to be favourites with Lauda and Clay Regazzoni looking ever so strong. Lauda must be a cert for the pole spot having been almost a second quicker than anyone else on race

Lauda to score again?

CHRIS WITTY outlines the prospects for this weekend's South African Grand Prix — second round of this year's World Drivers Championship



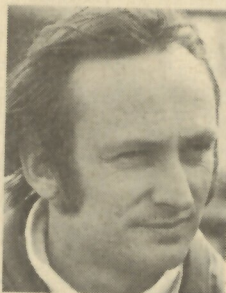
Gunnar Nilsson — Lotus



Brett Lunger — Surtees



Bob Evans — Lotus



Chris Amon — Ensign

rubber last week.

James Hunt and Jochen Mass in the Marlboro/McLaren team will be chasing hard though, as they did in Brazil, and James has already shown to the Ferrari team-leader that he'll be putting up one helluva fight.

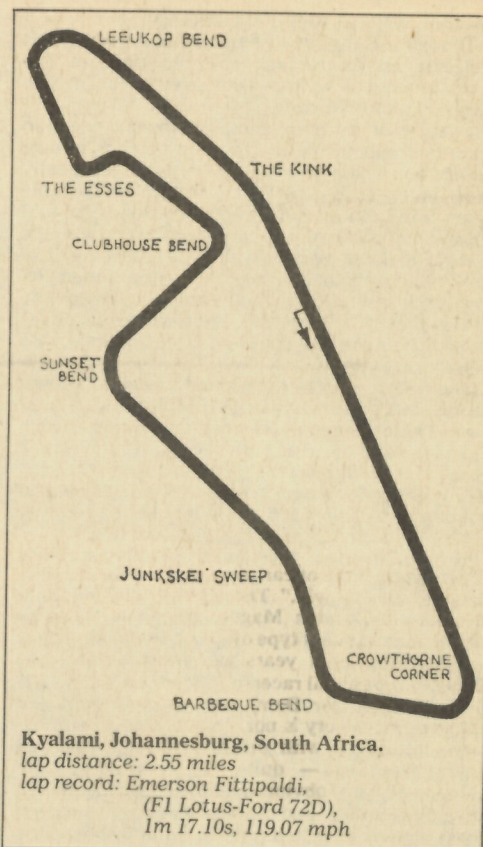
Another team who, judging by lap times shown last week, are going to be well to the fore (as in Brazil) are the AVS Shadow team with Jean-Pierre Jarier and Tom Pryce at the helm. Jarier, despite his inconsistency, could be regarded as the race's dark horse.

Another dark horse, again judging by recent testing times, is John Watson in the Penske PC3 and then there's Ronnie Peterson, making a return to the March team alongside Vittorio Brambilla and Hans Stuck. Even Frenchman Jacques Laffite in the Ligier-Matra has been whittling down his lap times with remarkable ease.

As is to be expected, the entry is very much as in Brazil with a couple of notable exceptions. Stanley-BRM aren't going but Vel's Parnelli are, so Mario Andretti rejoins them after a brief stay at John Player-Team Lotus. The latter have two new drivers, Gunnar Nilsson and Bob Evans, while Peterson ousted Lella Lombardi at March. Also ousted out, this time at Frank Williams, is Renzo Zorzi, and in comes Michel Leclerc to partner Jacky Ickx while there is just one Copersucar going for Emerson Fittipaldi, Ingo Hoffmann staying at home until a new car is built.

Austrian Harald Ertl makes his first appearance in the works Hesketh Racing set-up, still run by Bubbles Horsley while Chris Amon (now fully recovered after injury) drives the old Ensign, the new car still not quite ready. Team Surtees also make a reappearance with American Brett Lunger handling one of the team's new TS19s, although Alan Jones has been driving it as well in testing.

There are 25 cars entered which means that everyone will be allowed to start the race on



SOUTH AFRICAN GRAND PRIX — previous results

1972 (79 laps — 201.45 miles)

1. D. Hulme (McLaren-Ford M19C), 114.23 mph;
2. E. Fittipaldi (Lotus-Ford 72D);
3. P. Revson (McLaren-Ford M18C)

1973 (79 laps — 201.45 miles)

1. J. Stewart (Tyrrell-Ford 006), 117.14 mph;
2. P. Revson (McLaren-Ford M23);
3. E. Fittipaldi (Lotus-Ford 72D)

1974 (78 laps — 198.90 miles)

1. C. Reutemann (Brabham-Ford BT44), 116.24 mph;
2. J-P. Beltoise (BRM P201);
3. M. Hailwood (McLaren-Ford M23).

1975 (78 laps — 198.90 miles)

1. J. Scheckter (Tyrrell-Ford 007), 115.51 mph;
2. C. Reutemann (Brabham-Ford BT44B);
3. P. Depailler (Tyrrell-Ford 007).

Radio Coverage (BBC Radio 2)

Thursday and Friday probably practice report at 6.45 pm. Saturday 1.30 pm (Sport on 2), 5.30 pm (Sports Report).

South African Grand Prix itinerary:

Practice: Wednesday, Thursday, 10-11.30 am, 1.2 pm

Race (78 laps): Saturday, 1.30 pm (11.30 am our time).

World Championship (after one round): Niki Lauda, 9 points; Patrick Depailler, 6; Tom Pryce, 4; Hans Stuck, 3; Jody Scheckter, 2; Jochen Mass, 1.

Saturday. The lap record is shown in the adjoining panel but Kyalami is a strange circuit where lap times fluctuate quite dramatically by the hour, let alone by the day.

Last year's pole time was 1m 16.41s set up by Pace's Brabham BT44B. The year before Lauda's Ferrari managed 1m 16.58s whereas in 1973, Denny Hulme secured his first ever GP pole in the new McLaren M23 at 1m 16.28s. Past records show that the grids at Kyalami are usually very close (3.2s covering the entire field for the past two years) so it'll all be down to searching for hundredths by the time practice which started yesterday (Wednesday), gets underway.

Cockpit Cameo



One of Magee's best races was at Monaco in 1973 when he finished third in the F3 race.

Damien Magee—dark horse?

"I'll race any type of car, any time any where and I always race to win." These were the words of 30-year-old Damien Magee, the man who has driven almost every type of single seater there is in the last couple of years and each time shown himself to be a real racer, a 100 percent trier.

The reason for Damien's vast experience in different machinery is not, unfortunately, that he's been inundated with offers or that he's raced every weekend — quite the reverse in fact. Despite his very obvious ability he is perhaps one of the forgotten men of British racing — and to keep himself in racing and in the public eye he's had to scratch around and just take what has been on offer. Damien's not the sort of person though who will let this worry him, he's happy to just be sitting in a racing car, no matter what it is. Although there's nothing concrete for 1976 as yet, the signs are that the long struggle is perhaps over and that the name Damien Magee will be seen in one competitive car for more than two consecutive races. If ever a man deserved reward for perseverance it's Damien.

Now a resident in London, Damien hails from Belfast's Falls Road, the third youngest of a family of five boys and five girls. He doesn't recall too much about his early life except that he learned about handicrafts at St Mary's Christian Brothers' School in Belfast, "Oh and I learned how to count money too but I still haven't had the chance to put that into practical use" he adds jokingly in his thick Irish brogue.

It was his skill with his hands that took him into the motor trade on leaving school when he literally crossed the road and worked in Gerry Kinnane's garage. I worked under a great guy called Fred Smith who built racing bikes and this is what I wanted to do initially". At the weekends though it was cars that he was involved in as racing mechanic to John Pollock. His weekday boss Kinnane was also racing at the time and Damien's good natured, yet determined, bragging finally saw Kinnane sufficiently convinced of Damien's potential (he'd never driven a racing car!) that he bought him a racing licence and a 1000 cc Lotus XI which Damien rebuilt and raced at Bishops Court in 1967/68. At the first meeting the new boy Magee won three races, two cups and £50 which is still probably the best day's reward he's had. The car was soon sold and replaced with a ex-Piers Courage Lotus 35 t/c with which he picked up many placings but no wins. That was the end of his racing with Kinnane "he was really great to me and gave me a terrific start in racing ... come to think of it he's got a nice Atlantic March back home ...". Two other famous names in Irish racing circles also featured strongly in Damien's early career and he's still full of praise for what the three did for him. The other two were Luke Duffy, who ran him in a twin cam Cooper and John Crossle, who helped him with a Formula Ford programme which brought him across the water. His first really serious year of racing was in 1970 when he won the Scottish formula Ford Championship "beating people like Bob Evans and Peter Hull" in a works backed Crossle. This venture and his following years with respective FF and F3 Pallisers were backed by Ray Moore and his Royale Restaurants concern. Moore was a



great friend and fan of Damien and although he had to pull out halfway through his first F3 season because it was so expensive he still helps out as much as possible and keeps a close eye on what's going on. "If it hadn't been for Ray I probably wouldn't have been able to stay in racing over the past few years, he's been really good to me".

After a reasonably successful time in English FF with a Palliser (preparing the car himself and commuting to England) Damien made the move into F3 in 1972 with the ex-Peter Lamplough WDF3 Palliser. Immediately he was quick and in his debut race was second fastest in practice. Unfortunately nobody realised just how expensive it would be and by Monaco time the kitty was dry and that was really the end of any permanent race programme for Damien. Since that time it's been a succession of different cars and deals, each combination lasting little more than a few weeks. He did struggle on with the Palliser for a little while "reversing the brake pads round to make them last and running the tyres back to front — we couldn't run a wing either because the engine wasn't powerful enough to pull the car."

Towards the end of 1972 he met Larry Sevitt of the Tiran Auto Centre who had been running the AIRO F3 Brabhams. He tested a few drivers and Damien was the quickest. He had eight reasonable races for the team in the unsuccessful BT38 at the end of the season and Sevitt planned to run him the following year but then went home to Israel. The Palliser was resurrected with the help of Keith Tilbrook, who had prepared the Brabham. Tilbrook has looked after all Damien's cars since then, working totally unpaid and actually buying the petrol, tyres and paying the entry fees himself: "The great thing about helping Damien is you know he'll put in 100 per cent all the time on the track".

In early 1973 Damien's driving of the old Palliser was sensational and he was always right at the front but at Thruxton the engine seized round the fast bit at the back and threw the car off the circuit. It flipped four times and landed upside down. Luckily unhurt, Damien extricated himself, smiling as always, but the car was then ceremoniously buried. His performances though had been enough to persuade Gerry Marshall and another

legendary car wheeler dealer, Irishman Tony "Monkey" Brown to buy him a new Brabham. He scored a tremendous third in Monaco but almost before the flag had dropped Mr Brown had managed to sell the car. Monkey was keen to move in on the racing car market and during the next couple of years numerous cars passed through his hands and Damien got to drive most of them but the moment a car was successful it was sold so there was never anything permanent on the go. Hexagon's Paul Michaels helped out too, giving him a ride in his F5000 Trojan and doing a deal with Brown whereby Damien drove the F1 Brabham BT37 at Phoenix Park. More varied F5000 drives followed in 1974, the best being a very close second to Tony Dean at Brands in the wet in a Chevron — but still nobody took much notice.

The reconstituted Palliser set-up contracted Damien to drive their works FF2000 in 1975 and after some good results there came an internal disagreement and Damien quit. The day after his last race for them though he signed one of Bernie Ecclestone's "we'll do all we can to help him" contracts. This came about following some truly sensational F5000 drives in Jim Kelly's rather battered old Trojan T101. The team had no money but what seemed like every Irishman in England and the ever faithful Keith made sure somehow that it was always raceable. Despite numerous old age breakages the determined Damien claimed pole positions, led races and did amazing things in a car which really wouldn't have looked out of place on a scrap heap.

Ecclestone was impressed and in fact got Damien into one of Frank Williams' F1 cars for the Swedish GP. It never was a really competitive car but despite missing the first practice session, Damien did a typical workmanlike job and brought the car home to the finish. Despite a sticking throttle and incurable understeer, "I really enjoyed that although physically it was very hard".

Almost immediately after that Alan McCall asked Damien to drive one of his Tui's in the Canadian Atlantic series. Again it was a shoestring deal running old tyres and rebuilding the engines on the side of road en route to the meeting. "It was a good series and I really loved Three Rivers," said Damien, whose enthusiasm for life and general humour made him, personally, a great success. After that it was back to England and the Trojan to finish off the year.

Determination to overcome the odds is the one quality which has stood out throughout Damien's career and it would appear that he has an enormous amount of natural car control but he's never really been given credit for it — the only reward being small budget drives: "I don't know why nothing's come up, but I don't hold any grudges."

I feel that I can still make it if I get the right opportunity. I'm not going to sit around and do nothing like some people in my position. I'll race anything." Damien has occasionally been accused of being a wild driver, something that he refutes: "I haven't had an accident of my own accord for years but I admit I do tend to drive close to others. I learned that in F3 when it had to be that way. If I see an opening I'll go for it, if you stop to think about it, it'll be gone. I start racing when the flag stops, too many people hang around for two laps making sure everything is okay."

That's what I like about Damien, he's a real racer, in his own way Britain's answer to the great Clay Regazzoni. What he really needs is the physiological boost of a permanent drive in something that is competitive. No driver can be expected to mature into a really consistent racer if he doesn't know his future beyond the chequered flag. Damien has got the offer of works Nicholson engines in Atlantic for '76 but has no chassis. During the week he works at John Macdonald's Willesden Auto's garage which is also the HQ of the impressive RAM team. Although nothing's settled as yet there's a good chance that Damien may be given the opportunity to have a go at the G8 series. If he does I'll bet anyone that he'll win it.

Outwardly Damien's a real extrovert, but when you get to know him he's a very genuine man underneath who'll give his utmost to anyone who gives him the slightest help. He just could be the dark horse of 1976.

IAN PHILLIPS



Alfonso de Portago walks to his Tour de France car in company with Stirling Moss.

NAME FROM THE PAST

De Portago—Conquistador

By NIGEL ROEBUCK

DID you catch that film on BBC2 recently — "The Green Helmet"? If you missed it, don't lose any sleep over it. It was hardly a serious contender for an Academy Award; if you saw it, you'll know what I mean. And there are others in the same vein... "Checkpoint", "Such Men are Dangerous"...

These movies were all made nearly twenty years ago, and film-making has come a long way since then. There is always some nice racing footage in these epics, however, albeit marred by ludicrous speeding-up. One sees Maseratis and Ferraris hurtling around mountain hairpins, flaunting the laws of gravity. Like a ball on the end of a piece of string. Buster Keaton goes motor racing, folks.

The ingredients are always the same. There is a good guy, a bad guy, an ever-loyal bird, horrific accidents (usually at a location different from the place where the race started...), bloody overalls... he would have wanted it that way, baby...

The hero in these films is always a bit hard to take. Rugged, tough but sentimental, a crooked smile but straight teeth... you know the type. Kirk Douglas or Anthony Steel. The only problem is that most racing drivers don't look like that. They don't go boozing the night before a race, they don't have fights all the time. They are managed, packaged and programmed to deliver the goods in a hard, commercial world. Appearance is everything. Emotions are for later when the door is shut.

In fact, it hasn't always been like that. Twenty years ago, there was a racing driver who looked and behaved more like an MGM product than Hollywood would dare to believe. The story of Alfonso de Portago reads like a Harold Robbins script.

If Portago were racing today, sponsors would be queuing up to meet him, to get his name on a contract. For the man was instant copy, a gossip columnist's dream. He was Spanish, which made him mysterious; he was a nobleman, a genuine Marquis, which made him royal; he was handsome, which made him romantic; he was wealthy, which made him irresistible to women who would have been quite interested in a handsome Spanish nobleman, anyway. And he could do everything, which made him a phenomenon.

All his life, Fon was drawn to dangerous things. His father had been a Civil War hero, who once swam out to a Loyalist submarine and blew it up with a home-made bomb. So Fon had quite an act to follow, and he went to the task with a will. At 17, he flew an aeroplane under a bridge for a 500 dollar bet... Always he looked for exciting things to do, places to go. He became the leading amateur steeplechase jockey in the world and took part in the Grand National several times. He was an expert swordsman, pilot, boxer, polo, tennis and jai-alai player...

In 1954 Portago went to St. Moritz for a few weeks to do some skiing — at which he was superb, naturally. Soon he was bored with that, however, and turned his attention to the Cresta Run. Here was something new. Fon was not one to take things easy; there was no question of listening to advice and starting slowly. His enthusiasm for things never seemed to last very long. Strike while the iron is hot. Portago's succession of accidents made him the butt of jokes among the Cresta crowd, but soon the laughter stopped. Fon was getting the hang of the thing, and man and waggon were frequently arriving together at the bottom of the run... Not only that, they were getting there quickly. By the time Portago left St. Moritz, he had set a new record for the Cresta! Thereafter, he never

not easily conquered.

Portago's introduction to motor racing came through Harry Schell. The Franco-American was a longtime friend of Fon, and the two men were very much of the same type, enjoying life to the full, taking a raincheck on tomorrow. And both had, shall we say, a healthy interest in women. With Portago, in fact, it was an obsession rather than an interest...

Harry Schell entered a Ferrari in the Sebring 12 Hours in 1954 and, much against his better judgment, was persuaded to nominate Portago as his co-driver. It was all right, Fon said. No sweat.

The left pedal, Fon

At this point, it is worth making mention of the fact that Portago's previous driving experience had been confined to big American cars with automatic transmission, air conditioning and the whole bit. Observers at Sebring on the first day of qualifying blinked and swallowed hard as they watched that Ferrari meander round the circuit. I mean, who is that guy...? Back in the pits, Schell waited nervously for the return of his protégé and his beautiful race car. Finally the Ferrari came down pit lane and shuddered to a halt. Tactfully, Harry asked if there was a problem, and Fon said he was having trouble changing gear. All of which was not to much of a surprise when it was learned that the clutch pedal had played no part in his attempts... He had never driven a manual transmission car in his life, and now he was using a Ferrari at Sebring in order to plug that gap in his experience! Schell suggested that perhaps it might be a nice idea if Fon gave this race a miss, but the Spaniard would have none of it. He would learn, he said. Less than two years later, he was a member of the factory Ferrari team.

Before joining Ferrari officially, however, Portago had a lot to learn. It was a natural thing, never forced. Throughout his career, Fon never shed his indolent attitude for life. He made no attempt to learn about cars. He wasn't interested. He didn't even like cars for themselves. They bored him. They were there simply to be driven, to be conquered. When they were, he would move on to something else.

In 1955, he bought a Formula 1 Ferrari and entered it for most of the Grands Prix. In addition, he drove a works car in many of the World Championship sports car races. The Commendatore was sufficiently impressed with Fon's progress to offer him a place in the factory team for 1956. For Portago, however, there were other things to be done in the meantime. Somebody pointed him in the direction of bobsleighbing. Fon tried a few runs in Switzerland, and pronounced himself fit for the Winter Olympics, to be held a month later... Spain, he felt, should be represented in the four-man bob event, and he would be the driver.

One-tenth of a second

When Spain 1 (and only) arrived, eyebrows were raised. Who did this arrogant guy think he

showed the remotest interest in repeating the experience.

It was in 1954 that Alfonso de Portago went motor racing. It was inevitable that one day he would try it. After all, it was glamorous, dangerous and something new. It was a revelation to him. Here, at last, was something

Alfonso de Portago's Ferrari 250GT, shared with Eddy Nelson, on its way to a Tour de France win.



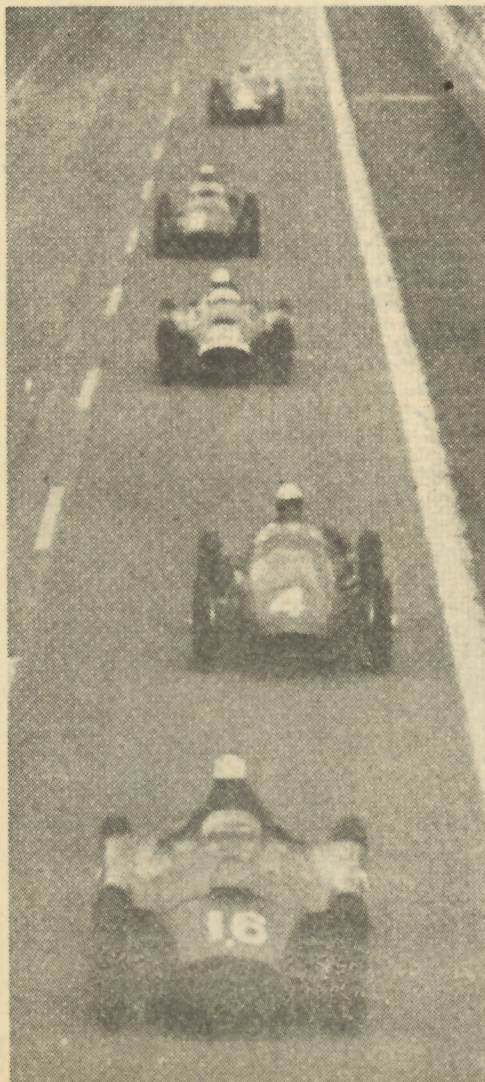


On his way to third overall at Buenos Aires in '57, de Portago is seen here at the wheel of his V12 290 Sport Ferrari.

was? Frequently during practice, the bob arrived at the bottom without any passengers but, as usual, Fon was learning quickly. And seven days later, Spain 1 finished fourth, to the astonishment of all save Portago, whose reaction was one of anger at having missed a medal by a tenth of a second. And that was the end of bobsleighting.

Portago, as you may now realise, was very much his own man. He was far from overawed at having progressed so quickly in motor racing. He expected it. There was never any question of racing taking over the man. It was never in his blood, never used him. There have always been men completely seduced by motor racing, unable to break free of it, even when the future holds only heartbreak and frustration, a hopeless desire to bring back yesterday, the best years long gone. For Portago, it would never be like that. He never had any intention of racing for more than a few years. To be World Champion was his aim, and

De Portago's Ferrari is chased by Behra (Maserati), Gendebien (Ferrari) and the Maseratis of Moss and Perdica at the start of the '56 French GP.



once would have been enough.

Portago was not everyone's favourite person. He flaunted convention in all ways, and he was simply too good at everything. People get jealous, and Fon seemed to have it all going for him — wealth, ability, good looks. Despite possessing all the qualifications necessary to the jet-set, he had no taste for luxury, no interest in fashion. His appearance was unkempt, his hair long, his clothes usually black. From waking to sleeping, a cigarette dangled from the corner of his mouth. Often he didn't bother to shave. Always he did exactly what he thought, albeit in courteous fashion. He spoke fluent English, French and Italian, in addition to his native Spanish. Portago was married, but didn't let that affect his lifestyle too much. A steady stream of women passed through his life, the most celebrated being Linda Christian, a famous actress of the mid-fifties. Their affair was fully chronicled in social columns across the world. His wife was American. "How did he meet her?" he was asked once, the question receiving the wry reply "one does not meet an American girl; she meets you..."

The stories about Portago are legion. One of the most celebrated concerns a party on a yacht in Monte Carlo harbour. Fon was dancing and his girl friend's back was burned by a cigar held by an unpleasant Greek. It was accidental, but Portago was not amused and made no secret of the fact. Came the time to leave the party, and Fon and the girl emerged on deck to find four heavies in their way. The man with the cigar was apparently a shipping millionaire, and these hoods were his bodyguard. Four against one. Quickly grasping the situation, however, Portago solved the problem by untying a rope which released the boom which came down on the thugs!

Portago had very little luck in 1956, but his driving was maturing rapidly and he was consistently impressive. The following year began badly for Ferrari. Eugenio Castellotti was killed at Modena during a test session. Even without the Italian star, however, the Maranello line-up was a strong one by any standards: Musso, Collins, Hawthorn, von Trips, Phil Hill, Trintignant and Portago.

At the opening World Championship sports car race in 1957, Buenos Aires, Ferrari cleaned up, but nobody was fooled. The new 4½ litre V8 Maserati

450S had the legs of everything else, and if ever it finished a race, it would win. No question. Alarmingly, for the Ferrari team, reliability came to the 450S earlier than expected. At the very next race, Sebring, the thing ran like a train for the entire 12 hours, Behra and Fangio leaving everything else behind. The Ferrari was simply nothing like as quick. And next on the sports calendar was the Mille Miglia. Italy was waiting.

Fate played a significant hand in the build-up to the Mille Miglia. Fangio elected not to drive in the race he hated, then Behra was hurt in practice, and suddenly Maserati were down to just one star driver: Moss. Even so, there was a certain amount of confidence within the team, for Stirling had won the race two years earlier and was unquestionably the world's greatest sports car driver.

Premonitions

Five works Ferraris were entered for Peter Collins, Luigi Musso, Wolfgang von Trips, Piero Taruffi and Fon. Portago loathed the Mille Miglia and tried to get out of driving in it, but to no avail. For the first time in his life, he began to show outward signs of concern, and as the race day approached, so his premonitions grew stronger. "Maybe my early death will come next Sunday," he said to various friends. He tried hard to shrug off his worries, however, even to the extent of booking his tickets to Monte Carlo the following weekend. That was something from the future that he had now. It took him beyond the day of the Mille Miglia.

Accompanying Portago that day as his navigator was Eddy Nelson, an old friend. On the Sunday morning, he was pleased to see that Fon was his old self, relaxed and ready to go. Moreover, Portago was clearly on very good form and was running fourth after five hundred miles. Moss had retired the Maserati early in the race, and he had only his Ferrari team-mates as serious competition.

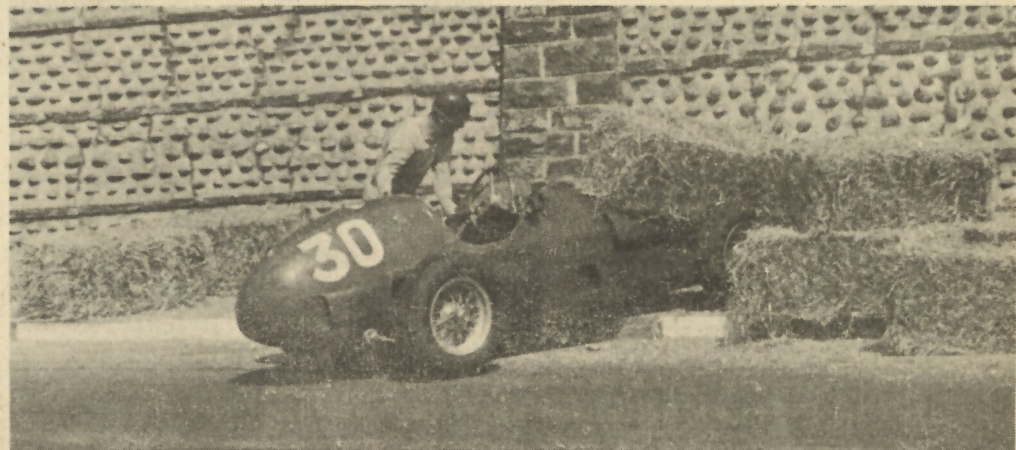
At the Rome checkpoint, Ferrari number 531 stopped for tyres and fuel, whereupon Fon let in the clutch and screamed away, only to screech to a stop. He had spotted Linda Christian, and waved to her. In a gesture straight from the movie set, she ran to the car, and Portago embraced her fiercely, to roars of Latin approval. Fon, who had been driving out of his skin for more than six hundred miles, had thrown away a full minute...

Portago made up time on those ahead over the Futa and Raticosa Passes, and was right with the leaders at Bologna, the last checkpoint, two hundred miles from the finish. In went the gas, Nelson had the card stamped, they were ready to go... And then one of the mechanics noticed that the bodywork was fouling a front tyre slightly. But Fon was impatient to get on with the race and waved the crew away ignoring their protestations. Everything would be all right.

At Guidizzolo, near Mantau, the tyre finally let go. In an instant, the situation was beyond redemption, the Ferrari was totally out of control. Portago, Nelson and eleven spectators were killed instantly, and with them died the Mille Miglia. The following day there was hysteria from the Vatican, an uproar in the press.

There has been nobody like Portago since, and probably there never will be. It would be less than the truth to pretend that he was a great racing driver, but he might well have become one. At the time of his death, he was discussing the possibility of fighting bulls. After all, he'd never tried it...

De Portago manhandles his car out of the bales after an excursion during practice at Pau.



Brabham-Alfa: will it work?

PETE LYONS interviews the car's designer, Gordon Murray, about the team's ambitious project.

Of all the busy F1 teams at Kyalami during the recent Goodyear test week, none were busier than Martini Brabham. Carlos Pace, taking his turn as the team's driving drudge, was hopping back and forth between his own car and Carlos Reutemann's, trying out endless permutations of experiments. There were different suspensions to try, different airboxes, different settings for the fuel injection of the Alfa Romeo engine, even a series of runs to take pressure readings from a system of manometers on the bodywork. All quite apart from the dozens of different tyre combinations to be tested.

It was the very archetype of a team determined to be successful, and indeed there was encouraging progress. Patient ministrations by the Alfa engine man, "Manni" Manfredini, induced the flat-12 to run cleanly throughout the rev range, and Pace was able to put up competitive lap times. When the faces hovering over the pair of red cars began to look relaxed and cheerful, it seemed a good time to ask the car's designer, Gordon Murray, how this ambitious project was progressing.

Better than Brazil! Brazil was pretty disastrous for us. We were looking fairly good in practice, for the situation I mean, but in the race neither engine wanted to rev at all. In the morning both drivers did 37's and we were quite encouraged. In the race Pace got one clean lap and thought, "Maybe I'm going to get somewhere," but then it wouldn't pull over about nine-eighths whereas it should pull 12. It was a mystery misfire, and I don't think they yet know what it was. Reutemann's was cleaner, but it didn't feel like it had the power; was that an effect of heat? We don't really know. And then of course he ran out of fuel.

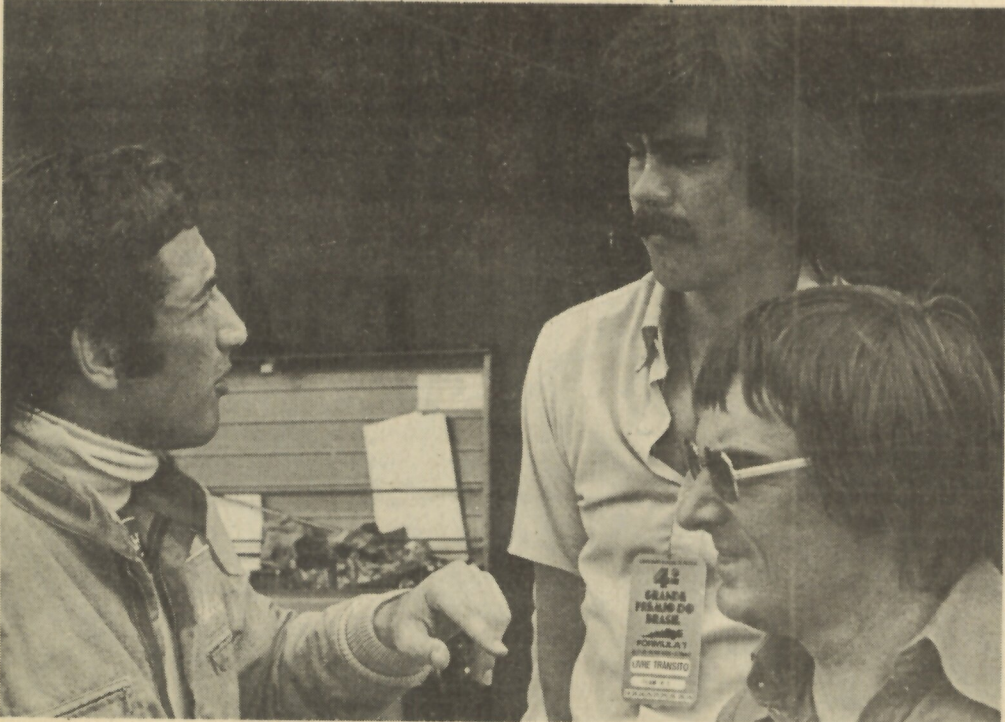
The net result was just the reverse of what I'd expected: I had thought we might be fairly fast but unreliable; it turned out the other way round. . . .

And since then . . . ?

We started off with the engine running badly, but we've slowly got it right just on fuel injection adjustment. Of course both Alfes and ourselves have done a lot of work, they've done a lot of work on the engine and we've changed a lot of our chassis systems, fuel system and so on. For sure, the engine as installed in the sports cars ran better than we've had it, so we're taking a close look to see if the problem isn't in our installation.

And then one of the major problems in Brazil was weight, so that's what we've been working very hard at. We've taken quite a fair bit off, I don't know exactly how much because we haven't had a chance to weigh the car yet but it must be in the region of perhaps 20 pounds. They've been an expensive 20 pounds, because the car was built light to start with; we've re-manufactured bits in titanium, for instance.

Carlos Pace, designer Gordon Murray and Bernie Ecclestone talk shop in Brazil.



It must be inevitable that the car be heavier than a Cosworth design?

Well, it turned out a little heavier than I expected, but of course it will be heavy because you have more fuel tankage, you have more coolant surface — bigger rads for both water and oil, the fuel system is more complicated, the oil system as well; it all adds up. The monocoque is bigger because of the bigger tanks, and it's got things like the mandatory new dash hoop — and of course the engine itself is a lot heavier.

As you know the DFV has a high vibration level, but we built the first Alfa chassis fairly conservatively just in case this "12 cylinder smoothness" turned out to be a myth. I think the car will become lighter as we build successive chassis.

We're going to have to get the fuel consumption better — it's using about 40 per cent too much at the moment. It's no good increasing the tankage in the car; if you accept that's what the engine does you're never going to be competitive anyway, that's just burying your head in the sand. You've got to make it better.

As the weight comes down, of course, the consumption will improve.

How does the engine compare to the Ferrari?

Oh, the Ferrari is a lot more, sort of "spindly" inside. The block casting and the crank particularly. Ferrari have accepted they've got to lighten it no matter what the expense, and they've built a F1 engine from scratch. For instance, they start every race with a new crank, whereas the Alfa crank looks, to me, as if it would do a season's racing! It's a very strong engine, it's a sports car engine, basically.



Haven't they uprated it for you?

Oh yes, they have been fantastically keen. One of the original considerations was their willingness to make changes to suit an F1 installation, and in fact they've changed just about everything bar the block and the heads for us. But there's still a lot to come, I think there's a lot of development left in the engine, and that was another consideration when we decided to go with them.

What were some of the other rationales?

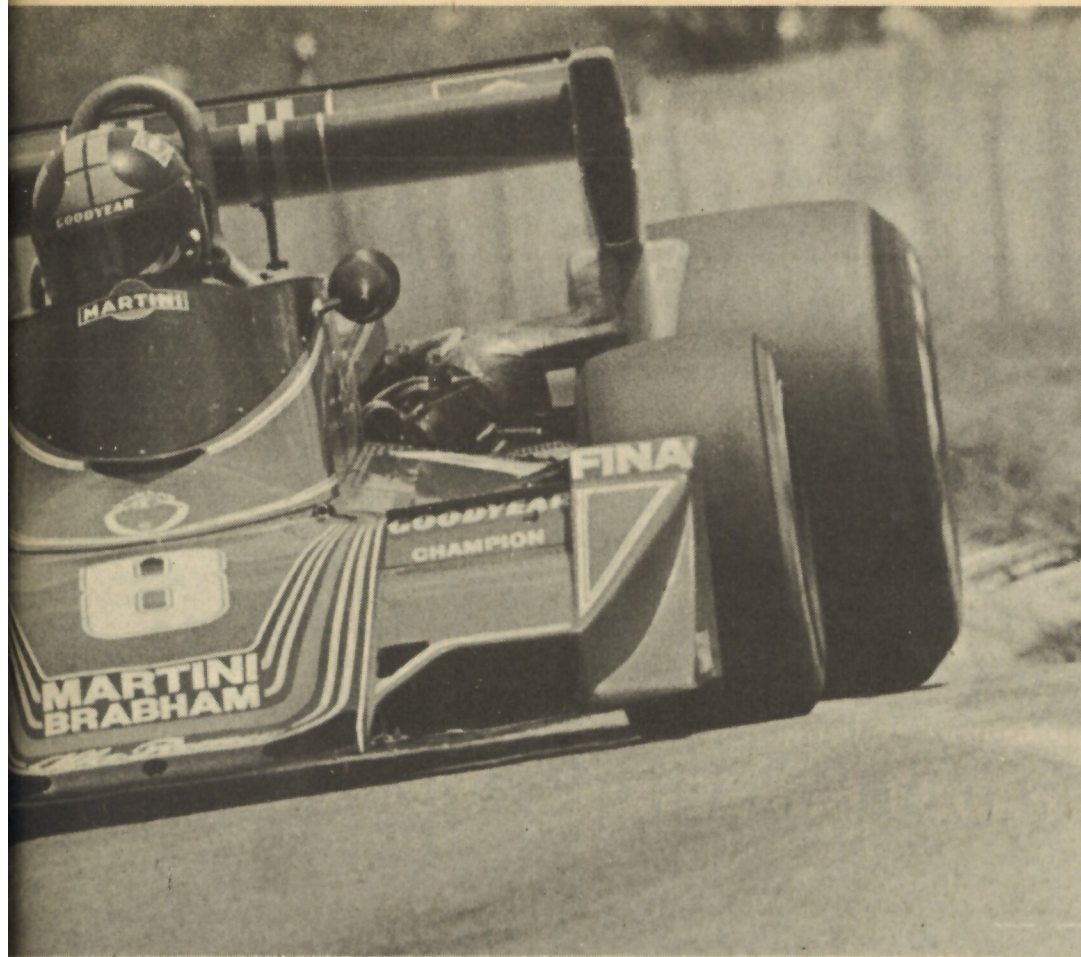
Well, first of all there was absolutely no pressure from the sponsor, they've been really great. In fact we started talking to Alfes before we ever started talking with Martini, I believe.

It was about the middle of 1974, when Ferrari first looked like going well, in fact it was at Monaco that year that we decided we were going to take a major step forward. I think that now, in 1976, Cosworth has probably got about one year left, in terms of development. Tyrrell tried last year some experimental engines, not big things but small mods that allowed better breathing at higher revs, that sort of thing, and they had a lot of structural failures that Tyrrell haven't had for years and years. So the DFV is obviously physically very near its limit, whereas the Ferrari has obviously got a little more to come, I think — they've actually detuned them a couple of times for reliability and fuel consumption. Their qualifying engines — if they were really in trouble — could be used as race engines.

So the decision really was, the Ford is near the end of its day, let's take an early decision and develop a new car. Any car, especially one with a new engine, is going to have a long development period.

We talked to a lot of other people about engines. Matra was one, and a couple of others I'd not like to mention because somebody else might catch on and approach them! At one stage we looked fairly deeply into making our own engine. But the Alfa was a running engine, and it looked like it had development potential. We decided long ago that we would go for long-term results, rather than short-term results.

We thought the 44 would be competitive for one more year, that is last year, but unfortunately the Alfa effort became so concentrated and complicated a project the development suffered on the Ford car from about mid-season on. But looking back now I don't really think we'd have done much better anyway; I'd much rather have the Alfa in this state now, and I think Bernie would too, than have another, say, 10 championship



Getting lighter and healthier... will the flat-twelve Brabham-Alfa prove equal to a Ferrari?

points with the Ford, because we still would have been second in the championship to Ferrari.

And as it looks now, the project was worth taking because I can't see Ford catching up. Ferrari are going well here in South Africa, and they were going well in the heat and altitude of Brazil; it's going to be a scramble among the Fords to win if the Ferrari fails, that's what it amounts to.

From the designer's point of view, it must be a more interesting and challenging project than just making another V8 car.

It has been from our point of view a fantastically interesting car — a lot more problems!

Right from the beginning we decided to do a proper race car, even if it might turn out to be an expensive failure, than simply stick an Alfa on the back of a 44 — like we did with the Weslake — and find it was much too heavy and the weight distribution was all wrong and it was ten seconds off the pace; we didn't really give the Weslake a fair chance. We were going to do it properly this

The flat-twelve engine — 500 bhp on the brake and the promise of more to come.

time, and if we were lucky and it all came together quickly we would then have a race car immediately, and we'd be giving the engine a chance.

You say you didn't give the Weslake a fair chance, but you reckon in retrospect it wasn't the right engine anyway?

I don't think for a start the V-12 is the right configuration for F1, these days anyway. It's the wrong shape, the weight is in the wrong place. I'm not saying you couldn't get one going quickly, but if you were starting out from scratch you wouldn't do a narrow-angle V12.

How about a flat-8; less bulk, less weight, less fuel consumption?

I don't really think you could do a better 8 than a DFV, because it's very near the sort of "ideal cube", which makes it ideal as a chassis member. It lets you completely finish the monocoque in front of the engine and know the engine is going to do the job. It's a very clever engine, the

Cosworth.

A flat engine has all sorts of problems, the centre of gravity isn't as low as people think — you see how high our crankshaft is. The overall CG is lower than a DFV, but not by much.

What are the chances of a turbocharged F1 engine?

Really, I don't know anything at all about that, I've only just read about that in *Pit & Paddock*. That's a sports car project they're doing.

You know, Alfas have been so co-operative it's incredible. They've done chassis stuff for us, when we've been pushed, in one-third the time that we could do it. They can make magnesium castings in a quarter the time! They've got something like 130 people at AutoDelta, you know. There's a titanium factory just next door. They've helped us all along.

You're describing an operation something like as big as Ferrari's.

It's bigger than Brabham's!

How is the engine shaping up compared to Ferrari's, power, revs, that sort of thing?

It seems to be getting a genuine 500 bhp, on the brake anyway, as an average, and that's at about 11,7 or 11,8 rpm. Now it needs to pull from down around 7, that's what we're trying to get right now. The Ferrari drivers use from about 6,5 to 13,000 rpm I believe, according to one of their drivers, which is incredible for an F1 engine, with the sort of power they've got. If we can get the Alfa like that we'd gain a lot, even with the excess weight, because the engine pick-up would be so smooth you could set up the chassis stiff like a go-kart.

You reckon a stiffly-sprung chassis is the way to go?

If you have engine characteristics like the Ferrari, yes. The concept of a soft, limber chassis has been changing over the last few years.

There are three reasons for that. One, the wing loadings have been going up and up as circuits tend to have more and more chicanes and less and less straights. Two, the road surfaces are becoming smoother and more artificial all the time, as they fill in dips and holes; you have less bangs and bumps. And three, the tyres work better and better over the years.

We're running higher spring frequencies to the tune of, oh, perhaps 25 per cent than three years ago — everybody is.

Does that tend to make the designer's job less challenging?

If that were the only factor, yes, chassis design would be getting easier. But the competition is getting closer and closer, the tuning gets finer and finer, and the outcome of those factors is that it is getting more difficult to find tenths. But the problem with Ferrari in it is not to find tenths but whole seconds!

What effect do you expect from the new regs that come into effect in Spain?

They're fairly sensible, the restrictions of the airbox and rear wing position. The problem was to reduce performance somewhat, and I think these two things will do it, more than a lot of people realise at this time. I think it's going to catch a lot of people out.

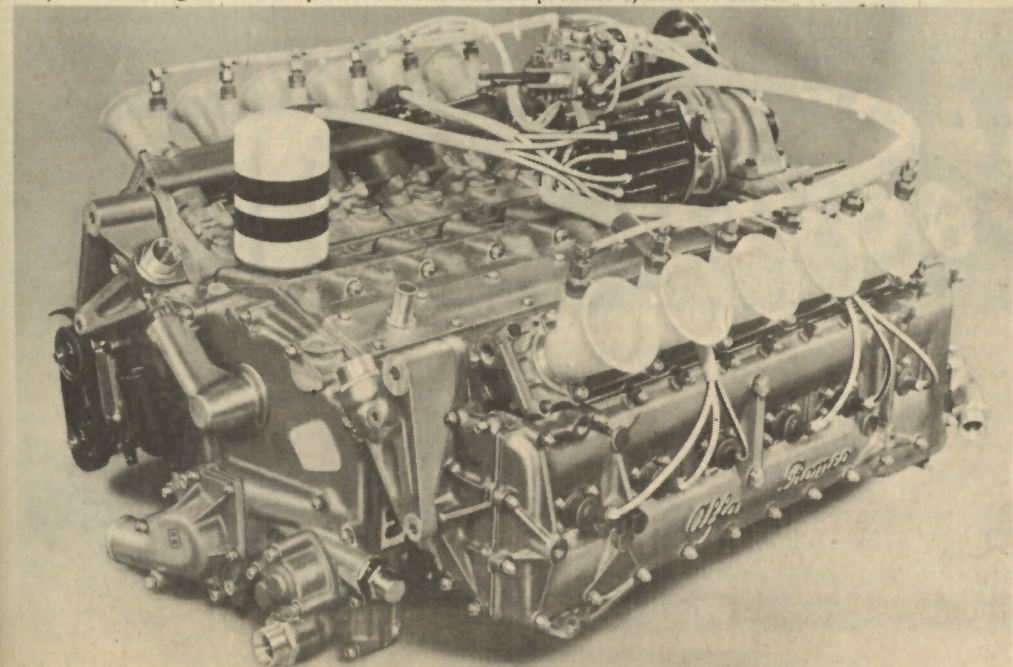
Are you happy with the new regulations?

Well, I'm not very happy with the way new regs are implemented at the moment. I think the constructors have been under a lot of pressure to make changes for changes' sake by the people who write the regulations, which I think is wrong. We've had meetings to come up with sensible ideas, but then they get misinterpreted, or written down wrongly.

We suggested that people make a conscious effort, for instance, to strengthen footwell areas, so we said we need a substantial structure in front of the driver's feet. Some cars had only a sheet of 18 gauge aluminium, with no pedal beam. They used other methods of stiffening the pedal box area behind the driver's feet, which we consider dangerous. But then, I don't know who's done it, but somebody is trying to put a figure on the pedal beam, which is almost impossible to calculate. That sort of thing: it gets overdone, or misinterpreted. That's the sort of thing that annoys me a little.

So you're embarked on a long-term project with Alfa, a three-year agreement as Bernie says, and although the initial race experience wasn't too good you do seem to be making progress here.

That's right, I think we're quite encouraged. Our aim is hopefully to be on even terms with Ferrari by mid-season or anyway by the end of the year, and I think we're going to be able to do it.





Variety is the spice of the VSCC's Pomeroy Trophy — Robert Cooper's GT40 is at the back of the grid for the high speed reliability trial.

SILVERSTONE

Bugatti 35T wins the 'Pom'

The 1976 Pomeroy Memorial Trophy Competition, an event designed to find the ideal Touring Car, was won last Saturday by a 1926 Bugatti 35T driven by Hugh Bergel. Another Bugatti, a 1923 supercharged Type 43, finished second driven by Hugh Conway, with the 1954 D-type Jaguar driven by Martin Morris in third position although he failed the Timed Stopping Test by not stopping astride the finish line.

Organised by the Vintage Sports Car Club, the Pomeroy Trophy is held at Silverstone Circuit and combines a series of tests, from which the cars are handicapped by the use of a formula. The 58 cars which started the event covered an era from 1918-1975 and represented over thirty different manufacturers, although almost all the 58 entries were of a different model. The event is open to members of the Vintage Sports Car Club, but the cars are of any age or type over the capacity of 1950 cc (1465 cc if supercharged), except for Vintage cars for which the minimum capacity is 1495 cc. The cars are divided into two classes, "A" for standard cars (which accounted for 45 of the entries) and "B" for Modified cars (13 starters) although naturally all have to be road-going. For the purpose of working out the Pomeroy formula, supercharged cars are deemed to have their capacities increased by one third.

The Pomeroy Memorial Trophy is only open to "A" class cars, while best performance in the Modified class resulted in a cup. First, second and third class awards are made to the runners-up depending on the number of starters in each class.

Therefore the important fact to remember about the Pom is that watching competitors' performances in the tests has to be related to the handicapping formula before knowing how well or not they are progressing in the results. The formula used for handicapping makes use of the following factors: C=The capacity in litres; Y (i)=The year of manufacture less 1900 (for cars 1930 or earlier); Y (ii)=The year of manufacture less 1900+The year of manufacture less 1930; L=The length in inches declared on the competitors' entry form; T=The actual time recorded; F=The figure of merit (In the Steering Test, the Standing Start Quarter, the Flying Quarter Mile sprint the lowest F receives maximum marks, double the lowest F or greater, no marks. In the Timed Stopping Test and the Fuel Consumption Test, marks are scaled as appropriate to the range of F).

An innovation for this year's event was the overall fuel consumption test (Test F), in which marks were awarded as follows:

$$F = \text{mpg} \times \text{square root of LC (Maximum 50)} \\ 4.5$$

Competitors were required to report to one of two filling stations en route to Silverstone, at the Peartree roundabout on the Oxford Ring road and at Watford, near Crick on the A5, where their tanks were filled to maximum capacity and sealed under the supervision of an official. At least this

ensured that all the entries were true road-going vehicles rather than those brought along on trailers as sometimes occurred in previous years. At the completion of all the tests, the tanks were refilled to the same level under the supervision of the same official at the Paddock pumps at Silverstone. The mpg figure was then calculated on the amount of fuel used as recorded by the officials against a set mileage which took into account the mileage of the tests, the mileage of exploratory laps at Silverstone, and the road mileage from the chosen filling station to Silverstone, although there was no mandatory route between the filling stations and the circuit.

The first test at the circuit was the Steering Test which was a driving test of the zig-zag nature (without involving stopping or reversing) allowing approximately 40 mph to be reached (Handicapping formula, $F=T \times \text{Maximum } 100$). There was a penalty of 10 for touching any marker which didn't deter the Reliant Sabre of Robin Rew who managed to spin. Chris Stewart's superb Jaguar XK SS got a little lost and wanted another attempt which certainly wasn't allowed. The fastest actual times recorded on this test were as follows:

M. Morris (Jaguar D), 19.09s; P. Dodds (Deep Sanderson 303 V8), 20.44s; R. Cooper (Ford GT40), 20.97s; P. J. Garland (Morgan +8), 21.21s; M. G. Dawson (Jaguar V12), 21.23s; C. Lawrence (Morgan +4 hardtop), 21.45s; W. Summers (Frazer Nash Mille Miglia), 21.94s; D. Black (Alfa Romeo 8c Spyder GS), 22.10s; H. Hine (Porsche 911S), 22.16s; A. D. Mitchell (Triumph Stag), 22.24s.

Test B was the Times Stopping Test in which from a standing start line, drivers crossed line "B" at speed of their choice and were required to stop astride line "C" at the first attempt, and competitors were times from line "B" to line "C". Two and four wheel braked cars were marked separately, and as in the previous test open cars, where applicable, had to have their hoods properly erected if a penalty of 10 marks was to be avoided. (The handicapping formula was $F=T \times \text{Maximum } 25$). Eleven cars failed this test for not stopping astride the line, which was fairly difficult to judge properly without losing too much time. Among those to fail were Peter Dodds' Martin V8-engined Deep Sanderson, Martin Morris' D-type Jaguar, the Aston Martin DB4GTs of Ian Hilton and Simon Phillips, Heath's beautifully restored 1952 Formula 2-based Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica and Roberts' Frazer Nash High Speed. However of those who performed the test properly the leading actual times were:

R. Cooper (Ford GT40), 6.2s; R. Rew (Reliant Sabre), 6.3s; J. Horton (Bugatti T43), 6.4s; D. Flanagan (Ferrari 365GTB), 6.5s; H. Hine (Porsche 911S) and P. Garland (Morgan+8), 6.8s; I. Woolstenholmes (Alvis Speed 25) and E. Harwood (Ford Lumo Capri 3000), 6.9s; V. P. L. Stafford (A.C. Ace Bristol), J. E. Shelley (Mercedes 280SL) and D. J. C. Bowles (Volvo 264 GL), 7.0s.

The next two tests were run concurrently on the Club Straight, starting with the Standing Start Quarter Mile Sprint (Handicapping formula of $F=T$ $100 \times (500 + 1.8H)$, Maximum 100)

and leading straight into the Flying Quarter Mile Sprint (Handicapping formula of $F=T \times \text{cube root of H. Maximum } 100$). One of the most notable items of these two tests was the perfect standing start made by David Flanagan's immaculate Ferrari 365GTB to give him fifth fastest time in the Standing Quarter test. Brian Mather's Reliant Sabre 6 fractured a crown wheel and was forced to retire at this point.

The fastest actual times in these tests were as follows:

Standing Start Quarter Mile Sprint — M. Morris (Jaguar D), 13.34s; P. Dodds (Deep Sanderson 303 V8), 13.56s; P. Channon (AC Cobra), 13.71s; R. Cooper (Ford GT40), 13.87 s; D. Flanagan (Ferrari 365GTB), 14.43s; R. Rew (Reliant Sabre), 14.75s; M. G. Dawson (Jaguar V12), 15.44s; P. J. Garland (Morgan+8), 15.49s; I. Hilton (Aston Martin DB4GT Zagato), 15.66s; A. G. Harper (Buick Riviera), 15.92s.

Flying Quarter Mile Sprint — M. Morris (Jaguar D), 7.32s; P. Dodds (Deep Sanderson 303 V8), 7.46s; R. Cooper (Ford GT40), 7.51s; P. Channon (AC Cobra), 7.66s; D. Flanagan (Ferrari 365 GTB), 8.58s; S. Phillips (Aston Martin DB4GT), 8.80s; R. Rew (Reliant Sabre) 8.92s; B. Fowler (Aston Martin DB5GT), 9.06s; S. F. Bond (Aston Martin DB4GT), 9.10s; I. Hilton (Aston Martin DB4GT Zagato), 9.14s.

The competition was completed by three 30 minute High Speed Reliability trials on the Silverstone Short Circuit, in which competitors were set a target number of laps to complete in this time based on the nearest whole number of laps for an average speed equal to $22 \times \text{sixth root of H}$ (for cars with two wheel brakes) and $24 \times \text{sixth root of H}$ (for cars with four wheel brakes). From starting marks of 100 deductions were made to the scale of 10 for every lap short of the target, 10 for every stop unless due to an obstruction on the circuit, and 20 if the car was not running at the end of the period.

There was some very close competition in all three high speed trials, although some competitors preferred to achieve their target laps as economically as possible while some of the faster machinery had to ease up towards the end of their time or risk running out of fuel. Barker's gleaming BMW 328 mac : the running in the first, although of course th se were not "races", while the Bugattis of Be gel (35T), Conway and Horton (both T43s) reeled c if their target laps at an adequate pace to claim their rewards as 1st, 2nd and 5th respectively in the overall Pomeroy competition. The first two finishers overall in the Modified class — Patrick Marsh's 1923 Vauxhall Wensum and Ian Woolstenholmes' 4.3 litre Speed 25 Alvis — lapped in close company for part of the 30 minutes, but Roberts' pristine 9.5 litre 1931 Hispano-Suiza J12 from the same class was going particularly well until it retired to the paddock with signs of steam from the engine and water from the exhaust.

In the second event Peter Dodds' rapid V8-engined Deep Sanderson left the rest of the competitors far behind until it rushed into the paddock and stopped beside the Gents toilet into which the driver disappeared equally rapidly! To the engine's relief he returned with a can full of water, but much time was left before the ensuing steam had disappeared and he could continue. A disc brake on Bob Fowler's Aston Martin DB4 GT broke up, Donnelly's Jaguar XK 120 began to leave a trail of smoke, Stewarts' Jaguar XK SS soon retired to the pits after an unhappy event, but Harper's hideous "£70 worth" of Buick Riviera lumbered on until the finish with some strenuous cornering efforts at Woodcote.

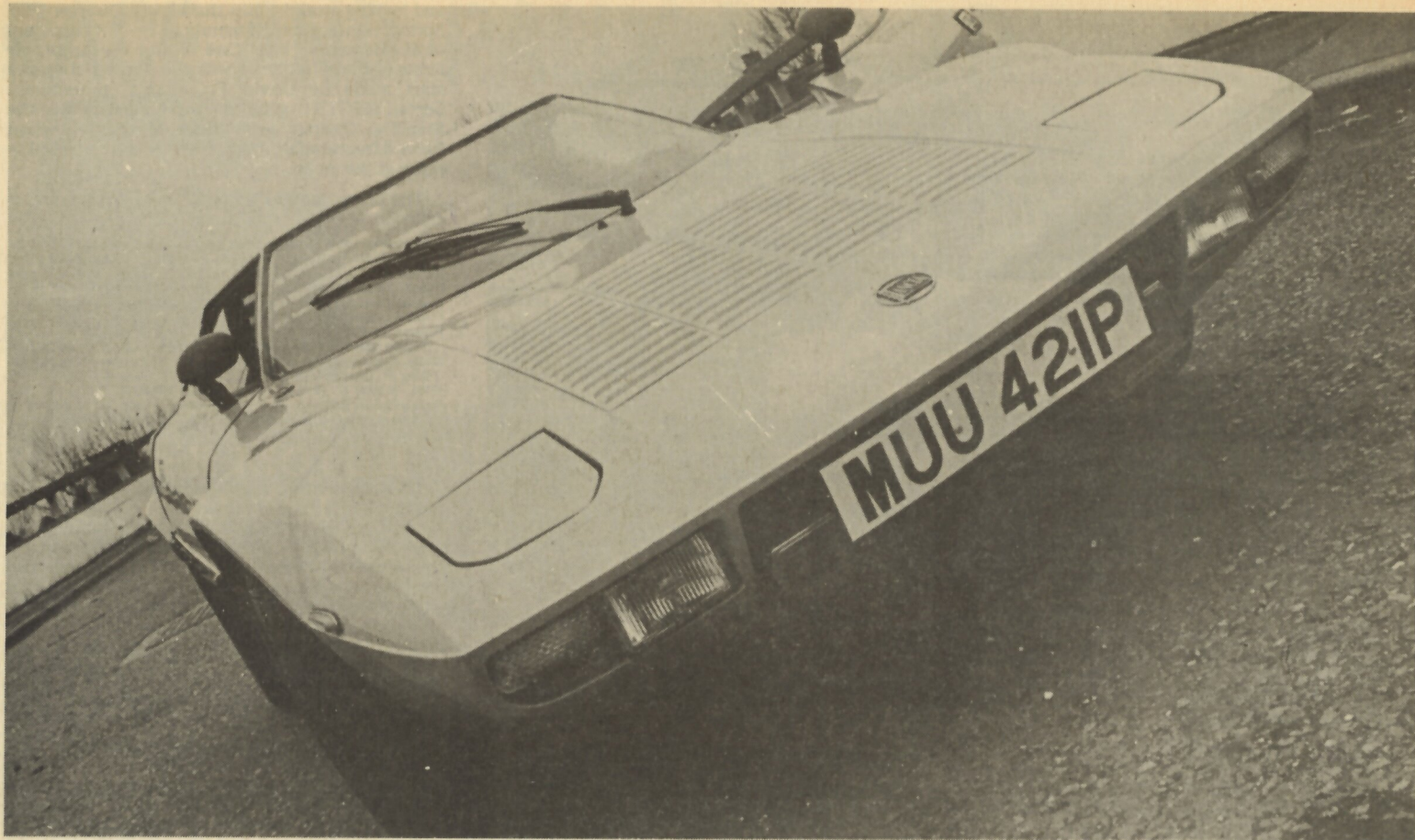
The final "blind" started with Paul Channon's 4.7 litre AC Cobra and Robert Cooper's Ford GT 40 lapping in close company before the GT 40 rushed off into the distance. David Flanagan's Ferrari lapped more sedately to claim a third class award, but Harvey Hine's Porsche sounded a little less crisp towards the finish. Morgan's MGB GT V8 ended its run by spinning off the circuit at Woodcote after many previous attempts, a manoeuvre nearly repeated by Garland's Plus 8 Morgan.

ROBERT FEARNALL

Pomeroy Memorial Trophy winner: H. C. Bergel (1926 Bugatti 35T), 401.28 marks. **Modified Class winner:** C. P. Marsh (1923 Vauxhall Wensum), 413.37 marks.

Standard cars section — 1st Class Awards: H. G. Conway (1928 Bugatti T43), 396.21; M. H. Morris (1954 Jaguar D), 393.71; T. J. Threlfall (1974 Ford Escort 2000), 393.72; J. Horton (1928 Bugatti T43), 389.21; W. H. Summers (1950 Frazer Nash Mille Miglia), 388.42. **2nd Class Awards:** M. W. Barker (1938 BMW 328), 382.99; H. P. Hine (1969 Porsche 911S), 382.73; W. D. A. Black (1932 Alfa Romeo 8c Spyder G/S), 379.51; C. J. Lawrence (1956 Morgan+4 Hardtop, 376.40. **3rd Class Awards:** W. J. Roberts (Frazer Nash High Speed), 366.96; W. A. Liddell (1918 Straker-Squire Brooklands), 364.43; V. P. L. Stafford (1957 AC Ace Bristol), 364.40; D. Flanagan (1966 Ferrari 365 GTB), 363.10.

Modified car section — 1st Class Award: 1 Woolstenholmes (1937 Alvis Speed 25), 354.87. **2nd Class Award:** E. C. Harwood (1970 Ford Lumo Capri 3000), 353.20. **3rd Class Award:** C. Holloway (1936 Bentley 4 1/4 Special), 343.38.



Kinda "far-out" ... seems an almost suitable American slang utterance for the commuter-hoards when they are overtaken by this Bertone projectile.

Eroticism on four wheels

CHRIS WITTY's impressions of a road-registered Lancia Stratos.

The young boy stood there and looked. He couldn't have been much more than twelve or thirteen years of age. "My father sent me actually," he said. "He saw the advertisement in the newspaper and didn't believe it." Believe what? you may ask. The Stratos, it's a real live Lancia type Stratos and, apart from the one that won the Mintex Dales rally the other week, this was the only one of its kind in Britain and, above all, on British registration plates.

"He owns a Ferrari Boxer" politely replied the young boy in answer to the obvious query. The thought of part-exchanging one noble Italian beast for another didn't quite seem right, after all Boxers were now regarded as a shade "common"; there being more than one of them in the country. It just would be right.

What was right and looked every bit "right" was this Stratos. God, it looked the part, resplendent in a bright shade of yellow like a great large phallic banana. Having heard about them, seen countless photographs, been made aware of their exploits and watched them hurled around British forests in competition, the sheer magic of actually looking at one, prepared for the road, was a totally new experience. It was an entirely different feeling, generated no doubt by this desire that in a matter of minutes, you'd be holding this machine, this Bertone creation, in the palms of your hands which had already begun to perspire.

Driving it on public roads was what I'd imagine the first woman to bare her breasts in public must have felt like. The centre of attention, the focal point. There again to some, it may well have been just another exotic-looking sports car. Exotic may be the optimum word. Like the Story of O relates to human eroticism, this was the story of a Space Odyssey on four wheels.

A thousand eyes

Nursing a hang-over of immense proportions, added to the fact that I'd had about two hours' sleep, I lay propped up against an earth bank trying to forget about the bitter cold. It was about 7 o'clock in the morning and I was one of many hundreds of spectators lining the final stage of the 1974 RAC Rally. My eyes were half closed, my inside felt like a sewer pit and all I wanted to do was roll over and fall asleep. Eventually after what seemed like an age the incessant chatter of spectators was broken by the sound of an approaching car. It was the unmistakable sound of an Escort, it's Ford BDA rising and falling as it negotiated the curves and hidden hazards lower down the special stage.

Responding to the fact that this is what I'd come to watch, it wasn't long before the continual drone of BDAs sent me into a hypnotic trance. Occasionally my eyes would strain into focus as the icy surface sent the accelerating car into vicious oversteering slides.

"That's it," "here it comes," and at once an air of excitement gripped everyone around. Everything became electric and your ears suspected that the noise, much different to that previously heard, which was approaching was the reason why you

were able to put up with numbed toes and a dreadful headache.

A thousand pair of eyes turned towards the crest of a hill from where this shrill sound was coming. It grew louder until this projectile burst into view and everyone in unison excitedly announced the arrival of the "Stratos".

The sight and sound of seeing such a car, seemingly totally alien to loose surface competition, slip and slide itself over that early morning ice with such grace, and yet such power, was like a cup of hot Bovril.

I'd barely seen the car in action for more than ten seconds but it had given me enough motivation, which had fermented over the year, to relieve that experience a year last December.

Banana split

Last Thursday I had the shortest affair in my life. "I'm afraid it represents a pretty large investment for us so, that being the case, neither of us has exactly given it a go down any little lanes." This was Simon Martyn talking, a young man in his early thirties who, in partnership with Malcolm Bessant, currently run a car business out of their fashionable mews premises near London's Albert



"Everything falls easily to hand..." The cockpit is very much driver-orientated.

Hall. It's a business which has only been operational since last July "when we both started with £500 capital apiece" but generally deals in the more up-market type of machinery. "We're mad about Porsches" and they both run them as current road cars.

Their involvement even extends into motor sport, both of them being keen rally enthusiasts having sponsored a car on last year's RAC while, on the Mintex Dales a fortnight ago, they gave financial support to Chris Sclater and intend to carry on with such a partnership.

The Stratos, which only recently came into their possession, does not represent a new rival for the Chequered Flag nor does it mean a new car for Chris Sclater (above all he can't fit into it properly). In business terms it represents a profit, a profit generated by the fact that this is the only type of car that will ever be registered in Britain for everyday road use. It's therefore unique. Why?

My source of information tells me that the Stratos fails to comply with enough of the safety regulations in this country (and several others) in order to satisfy the authorities. Anyway, this particular car entered these shores only quite recently via Switzerland where it was the personal road transport of a high-ranking official at Toblerone. It passed into the hands of Gerry Marshall and it was via this gent that I was able to trace the car to Martyn and Bessant with a request: May I drive it?

The mean machine

As the Fulvia neared the end of the road, both as a road and competition car, the replacement came in the novel form of the Stratos. Two years ago the world prepared itself for yet another mind-blowing creation from Italy. The stylist Bertone sculptured the shark-like shell while Lancia, Fiat and Ferrari (all of them interbred) added suitable components to the melting pot and thus the Stratos was evolved.

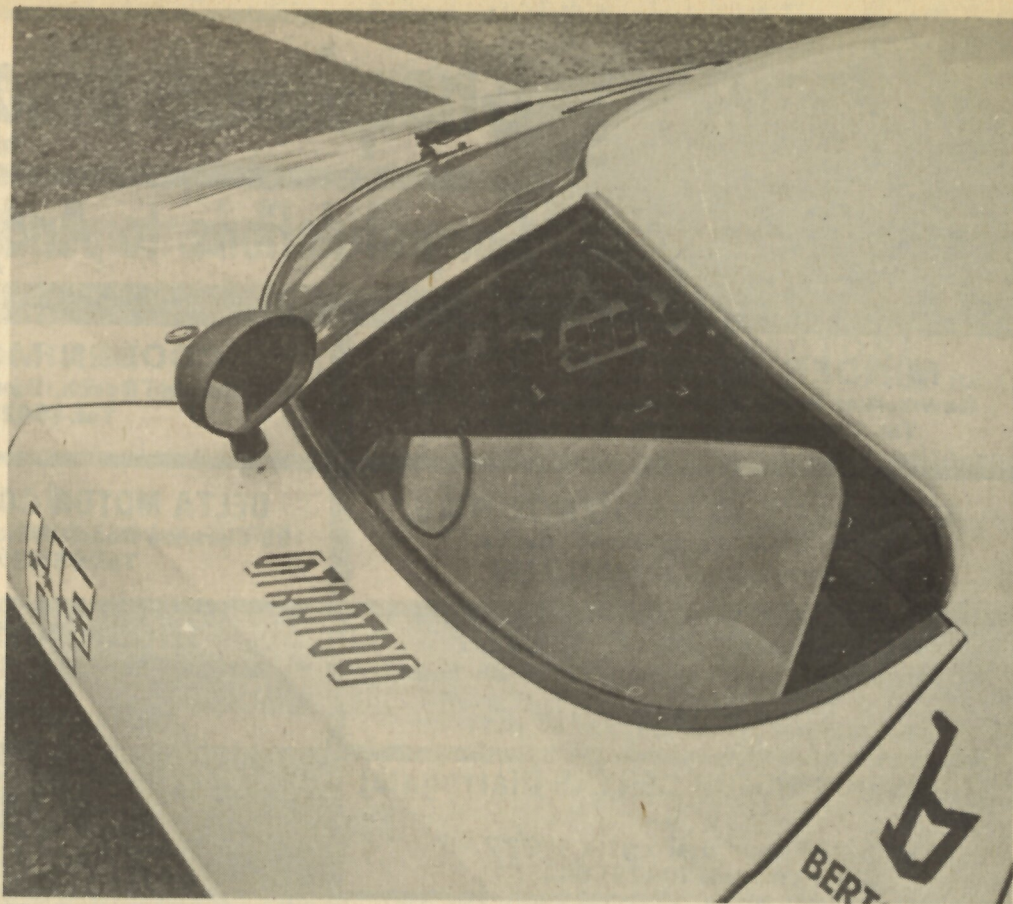
Perhaps it's fair to say that this machine was designed purely with competition in mind. It was a machine needed to cope with the ever-present threat of the French Alpine and the German Porsche. It had a job to do, a certain function to achieve, although to look at it one could well have been excused for thinking otherwise.

The design, so I'm told, was the result of much thought. The difference between a normal mid-engined sports coupe and the Stratos is its very short wheelbase at only 6.3 ft. A wide track almost makes it square.

No doubt thinking about the agility required in rally competition, low weight was a prime factor in the design. By using plastics and light alloy wherever possible for certain body parts, a "road going" Stratos may weigh less than 1,900 lbs.

Coupled to a lightened interior, the use of MacPherson suspension components at the rear and Fiat steering gear, and the 2.4-litre Dino V6 engine taken straight from the Ferrari 246 GT, you end up with one helluva potent machine.

In standard form the four-cam transversely mounted Ferrari engine pushes out almost 200 bhp at 7600 rpm with maximum torque of 166 lb/ft at 4800 rpm. Such a superb power-to-weight ratio (approaching 300 bhp per ton) produces transonic acceleration. Comparing it to the Dino, the Stratos has a ratio of 8.8 lb per horsepower, an improvement by 1.3 lb per bhp. A real mean machine.



When the stylists' dictates go beyond practicality — side windows stop short and doors are almost "over-square."

Reaching a climax

Sitting there adoringly in the mews garage, I eyed the machine with envy, wondering how such a car, no matter how unique, could justify the price being asked for it. "HF" and "Bertone" decals added a sporty flavour to the striking paintwork, set off by the gold Campagnola 7 x 14 wheels clad with Pirelli tyres. Did I really want it?

Clutching a Nikon F to my side, I clambered into the passenger's seat as the large door effortlessly swung itself up and forward. I'd been forewarned about the interior by our rally staff who'd already tasted the Flag's machine (which I envied). If Sclater couldn't fit then neither could I. Or could I?

The bucket seats, in tasteful blue suede which didn't go with the sunflower carpeting, was surprisingly well contoured and as my legs stretched effortlessly out towards the footwell, I looked around at the surroundings. Clicking off several frames, I longed to rid myself of the camera and grasp the steering wheel. Like a young impatient pupil, I couldn't wait for the acclimatisation period to be over.

Having finally settled into the driver's seat, my head kissing the padded roof lining, it was only then that I noticed how sparse the interior is. Save for all the relevant gauges panelled neatly together in front of you, everything else had been

forgotten. The window winding mechanism was crude, the side windows only disappear partially into the doors, but the door panel's thickness is such that bulky objects (such as a crash helmet) can be conveniently stowed. Side and forward vision was good, particularly with the windscreen dropping away from view with its huge single wiper. This particular car had a replacement perspex screen instead of the original Glaverbel variety of which there are no spares available (so I'm told) because of a complicated installation method.

The pedals are offset and the close proximity of the front wheels, together with the cockpit confines, gives the feel of an aircraft interior. At once an aura of confidence can be felt. Even in this cocoon-like shell, a feeling of security is very much in evidence. Perhaps it's the psychological effect, the very nature of the car, that conveys these phenomena.

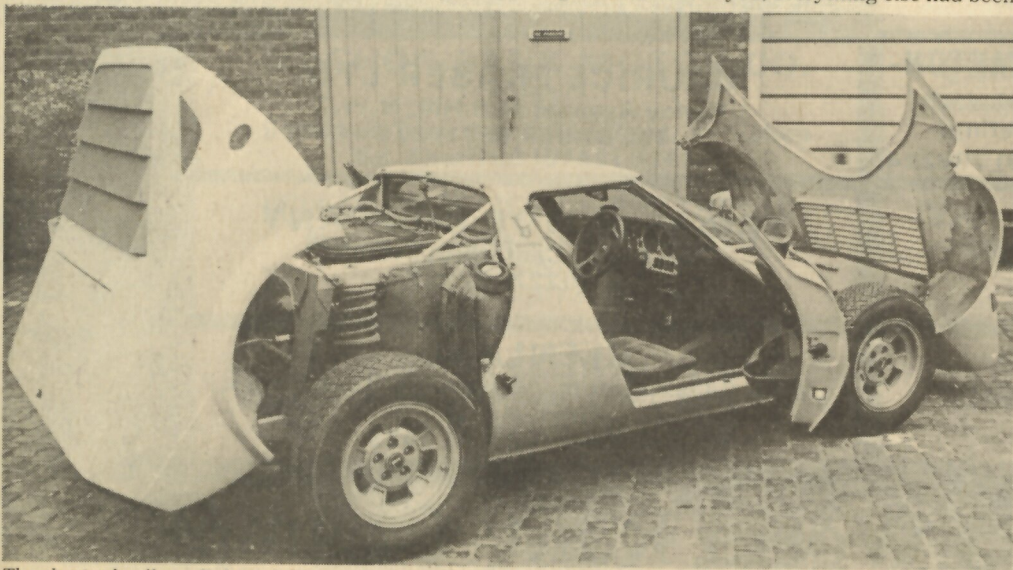
The Dino V6 crackles into life, the strong noisy heart beat thumping through from right behind you. The gearbox is, of course, from the Dino with the 5-speeds geared at 45 mph, 66 mph, 92 mph, 120 mph and about 145 mph at 8000 rpm (red-line) for road use. The yellow line begins at 7200 rpm.

Both the throttle and clutch pedals required definite pressure, the Ferrari unit blipping nervously as I prepared to ease out onto the unsuspecting British road user. Even at low revs, the unit pulled away smoothly and cleanly, whipping up around the tachometer, speedily dropping back as I punched it out of 1st and back across the gate into 2nd. Instantaneous is how I would describe the acceleration. Effortless is how I found the gearbox and reassuring the non-servo-assisted brakes while decelerating to legal speeds. However, the absence of any steering castor, together with an exceptionally light and low-geared steering, make it rather nervous at relatively low speeds. I hear that it is susceptible to cross winds due to the lack of aerodynamic down pressure, despite its angular wedge shape.

As to response at low speeds it can have few equals. An ideal rally car, certainly for tarmac work; but on the loose? Well, Sandro and Bjorn, I have new-found respect for your efforts. It must be hot and thirsty work keeping this libertine on the straight and narrow.

Casting aside the novelty aspect while driving such a car, I came to the conclusion that I could well live with one of these machines for a little longer. As I killed the engine with a farewell blip on the throttle, a little part of me died. How much did you say you wanted for it? "Just under £14,000" came the reply. Was it really worth it?

Well?



The short wheelbase lightweight construction is evident when the inards are revealed.



"Is it better to have a lot of mistakes but always the chance to check on those errors, or devise a system without this provision — and have a greatly reduced number of mistakes in the first place?"

MARTIN HOLMES

Time for a re-think?

The chaotic affair at the end of the Mintex International Rally highlights the need to re-think a lot of traditional rally practice. What happened at Scarborough in the early hours was in very few respects the fault of any person but the failure of a system. In a great number of respects rally practice in Britain differs from elsewhere. We often consider we have special demands through environmental reasons or simply that we have a unique degree of enlightenment in organisation — but after Scarborough, a question is bound to be asked. What price our special rules?

The whole Scarborough trauma was started by one small incident. In the tense atmosphere at the end of a special stage, a marshal made an error of timekeeping and the co-driver concerned did not spot the error. Errors are of course made wholesale on special stage rallies. In my experience they occur once every 10 or 15 stages to every competitor. Usually a co-driver can spot them, but in certain circumstances, particularly (as in this instance) when a second hand of the watch reaches its full minute they are less easy to notice. Why are so many errors made? Are our marshals so much more inexperienced than those in other countries where errors occur less frequently? With the incredible number of events in Britain this cannot be the primary cause. Marshal overload is therefore suspect. In what ways is our marshal-workload different?

In Britain the marshals at the finish of a special stage hold the official watch. Not only does the team of marshals at the Stop control have to enter in the timecards and the checksheets the time of arrival, they also have to read the watch as well. Abroad it is normal for the marshals at the flying finish sign to hold the official watch, so that the

Murky days ahead — unless we re-appraise timing and accounting methods? Sparrow on the Mintex.

marshals further down the road at the Stop control simply have to take down the message about the times. If there is confusion at the Stop control, the continental system leads to less distraction for the timekeeper who will be at least 100 yards away. At one stage of the Mintex, there were scenes of confusion when one co-driver was querying a rival's surprising time with a marshal at the same time as another competitor was finishing the stage. The conversation became so voluble that a message from the marshal at the flying finish was misheard and the stage had to be cancelled.

Part of the British sense of rally "enlightenment" is the provision of having the official watch at the Stop control for the purpose of enabling a competitor to check his time. Is it better to have a lot of mistakes but always the chance to check on those errors, or devise a system without this provision — and have a greatly reduced number of mistakes in the first place? This leads to another great British rally institution: the preference to rely on the timecard (the document filled in by the marshal but held by the competitors themselves) rather than the checksheet, the document filled in and retained by the marshals. Like golf, what is written on the timecard and is accepted (though not in rallying signed) by the competitor, stands. This is fair enough for a competitor. He sees the watch at the start of every stage, he has the chance of seeing the watch at the finish if he so desires: any error that ensues is his own fault. But errors happen in more than one way. A competitor can just as easily be given the benefit, as well as the burden, of a wrong time. Obviously no competitor will query a time if he profits by the error. So the checksheet can be of use. It is standard rally practice for the checksheet to be used in three instances. Firstly, to check in cases where a rival queries whether a competitor has been given the benefit of an error; secondly where there is an illegible entry — or perhaps simply an ambiguous entry, and thirdly (happily rarely), to protect the organisers against a fraudulent alteration of a timecard. With this system heavily engrained on the rally scene, co-drivers have become used to the burden of checking special stage watches as though their life depended on it. Many rallies — once even the Tour of Dean — have been lost by an error of watch-checking by a co-driver. Checking watches ranks along with checking results as one of a British co-driver's most important responsibilities.

Now we have to face the situation that all this may have to go. If the clocks have to be at the flying finish, rather than the Stop controls, co-drivers cannot be afforded the opportunity of inspecting them each time. With this loss of opportunity goes the rule that a time once entered on a timecard must remain unchallengeable by that competitor. In other words the checksheet will have to become the primary record, not the timecard. This would save those furious moments of argument that one sees so often at the end of a

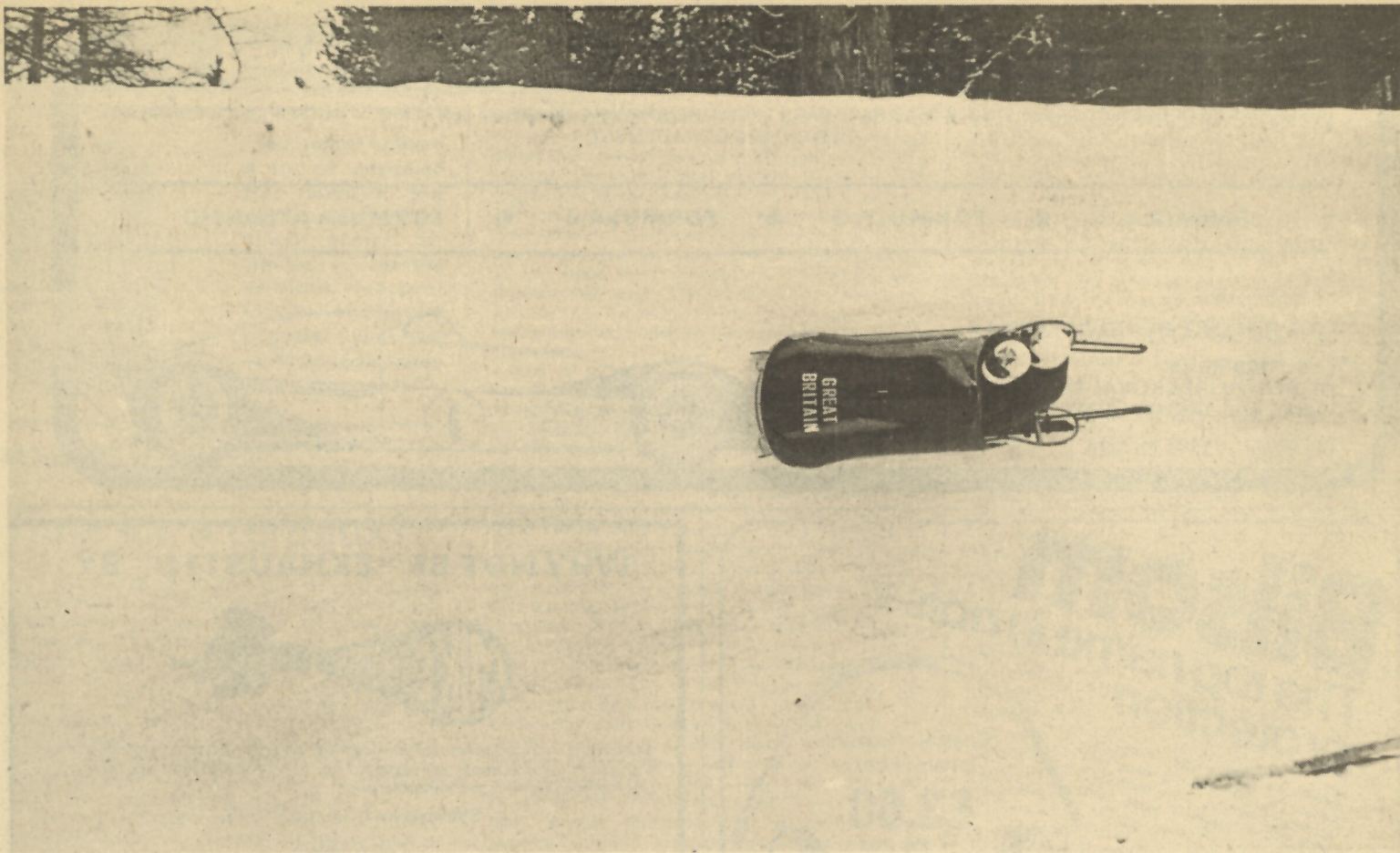
stage, situations which might result in a proper correction for the aggrieved party but lead to unhappiness, upset for the marshals, and a high probability that accuracy in timekeeping will worsen through this upset.

The attention to checksheets rather than the timecards can lead to many other improvements, notably in the preparation of rally results. If organisers can start their work of calculating results from the moment when each competitor completes the stages, rather than later when a timecard is handed in, speedier results will follow. Furthermore that ludicrous system whereby the times of competitors who retire are seldom published would be avoided. The times of competitors who retire are usually of greater interest than the times of those who finish! Speed of results production, however important to the promotion of the sport, is secondary to having the correct results in the first place. What we lack in Britain is a vehicle for explaining and publicising rally techniques. We have edicts from the RAC, but the laws are not the same as books which explain how those laws should be put into practice. Furthermore we lack a system whereby stewards announce the whys and the wherefores of their decisions. Obviously the immediate interest of rally followers is to know which of two or more contending competitors should receive the honours. The bother of a protest is of no ultimate benefit however, unless people know what reasons are used by stewards to come to a decision. Without this information people do not know how they can avoid the same trouble another time, and also the people involved do not know whether correct reasoning was used to arrive at decisions — and consequently whether it is worth appealing or not. What I suspect is that stewards in general have a loathing to commit themselves on subjects they do not fully understand, and prefer to seek a solution which sidesteps issues instead of solving them.

Obviously cancellation of the stage which ultimately gave the Stratos the victory on the Mintex was a convenient — though probably the correct — way out, but it left nobody conscious of what to do another time. Are timecards the primary document? Can competitors expect to correct a timekeeping error if they do not spot it at the time it is committed?

These problems are not the only clouds which dim the sunshine of British rallying. Road timing is a problem which can command a *Purely Personal* of its own, while the problems and the unsatisfactory rules limiting servicing can command the attention of a whole *AUTOSPORT* by itself. My personal hope for the future is that people understand why things go wrong. In such a fast-changing sport as rallying things can easily get out of hand — and if the events at the end of the Mintex are any guide, we must urgently take stock of our situation before the same situations recur.





Only the two most steeply banked corners, Sunny and Horseshoe, have an artificial foundation . . . the rest just melts away.

Rag, Tag and Bob-tail

CHRIS WITTY recalls his experiences on the St. Moritz bob run.

"For Great Britain we have Stuart Raber and Chris Witty. To ze boxen plees." The message booming across the tannoy was loud and clear. Suddenly a patriotic flush came over me. Heaving and puffing, the bob-sleigh was pushed into the starting area. Now was the time for composure. A quick check on the helmet's chin strap, a nervous pull on the gloves, incessant kicking on the wooden starting block to free your shoes of the ice that had formed on the spikes. Suddenly a bell rang. It's your turn.

"Ready" said your driver. You acknowledged. The starting procedure was all down to you. Pulling the near freezing air into panting lungs, you gathered strength and began to rock backwards and forwards on your toes, both hands clasped tightly around two push handles sticking up at the rear of the bob-sleigh.

"Okay." The rocking motion continued. "One and two and three and . . . aaarrggghhh." In one great heave your stomach muscles contorted, while the thigh and biceps flexed to maximum efficiency. It was a frantic sprint forward, the only hinderance being a 360 lb bob-sleigh which the pair of you were trying to push away as quickly as possible.

When it seemed like the last possible moment, you swung yourself forward between the push handles and swiftly settled in behind the driver. Now it was all down to him. You'd done your bit and nothing more was required, except for braking the bob to a stop at the bottom of the run little short of a mile away. It was a question of sitting tight and enjoying one helluva ride.

Witty leaps aboard for an exhilarating trip, with nothing more to do until the end of run brake application.



It had been one of those mornings for the "fearsome five", whose exploits on the St Moritz Cresta Run were outlined in last week's issue. Passing one of the fashionable coffee bars, Richard Lloyd's attention was diverted towards a young man sitting with his arm in a sling. It was Johnny Calcott, one of the British Olympic bob-sleigh team who'd been using the facilities at St Moritz in order to get in some late practice before the Games started in Innsbruck the following week. Calcott's practice had ended with an unpleasant accident while piloting one of the four-man bobs. They'd flipped and a piece of metal had pierced Calcott's elbow and wedged itself in the sinew. To hear him explain the incident was painful in itself but he reckoned, given a couple of days, he'd be back on the Run.

Within a couple of days Lloyd went missing. The Cresta's loss was the bob run's gain and it didn't take the author long to follow suit either.

For Lloyd, his racing exploits had brought him into contact with Chris Baldwin, regarded as one of Britain's better bob drivers but, strangely, not in the British Olympic team. While others journeyed on to seek gold, silver and bronze in Austria, Baldwin remained to contest the British Championships which just happened to coincide with the first week of the Olympics. Himself a past winner of Shellsport Escort races, Baldwin reckoned in his wisdom that racing drivers would make ideal bob drivers. Their mental attitude being able to combine and contain the feel of speed with finesse while descending the run. His feeling was shared also by HRH Prince Michael of Kent who was on hand to oversee and manage these particular championships. Both individuals did the perfect "sales job" to both Lloyd and myself and by the time our stay reached its conclusion, British bob-sleighting had two brand new converts.

What is it all about?

Many of you no doubt watched the Winter Olympics which the BBC televised recently. Suffice to say, our performances on both the two and four man bobsleigh events were disappointing. And yet having experienced several days competing on an Olympic run, both talking to the people and assessing the conditions, the picture becomes a little clearer. With no disrespect to those already taking part, out of which the majority are servicemen, our chances will only improve with adequate training and practice facilities, together with the introduction of fresh new blood in order to create much closer



Through Nash and Dixon... internal competition.

St Moritz is the oldest bob-sleigh run in the world having existed ever since the sport came into being around the 1890s. Of all the courses in Europe, St Moritz claims to be the only natural one in existence for throughout its 1500 metre descent down toward Celerina from St Moritz, only the two most steeply banked corners, Sunny and Horseshoe, have an artificial foundation. When the snow melts away, so does the run. It's just like the neighbouring Cresta.

Throughout the past 42 years, the track has been under the auspices of the current chief track builder and a party of 18 or so local workmen who, when the snows arrive, painstakingly mould the world renowned shute out of the ice.

The start line and assembly area are situated 'neath the bottom of the chic Dracula night club, the patron of which is Gunther Sachs. Running away from the start, the run slopes gently away allowing the bob to pick up speed, flicking its way through a long double apex left hander (Wall) before picking up electrifying acceleration through Snake, a left-right flick which, if taken incorrectly can easily put you on your side. Through Sunny, the run continues down through Nash and Dixon and up to the forbidding Horseshoe, a 180° corner which is banked over vertical, and can pull up to 4G on a four man bob.

Exiting this, visually one of the most exciting corners, the run sweeps through rights and lefts down toward the finish, names like Telephone, Shamrock, Dyke, Bridge and Tree meaning little to the uninitiated but everything to the bob-sleigh regular. Eventually you rattle around the final banked left-hander at maximum velocity (around 100 mph on a four-man) and eventually slither to a stop. If you're good, it'll take a two-man around 75s. If you're of Olympic standard, then you should be able to shave a further 4s off that time.

When you start bob-sleighbing, and believe me, it's not as ridiculously expensive a sport as many may think, the ropes are learnt on a *feierabend*, jokingly known as a bedstead.

These were introduced by the Swiss way back in 1930 and were used in competition right up until 1955. It was then that an Italian from Cortina, by the name of Podar, introduced the faired-in bob used today. The Podar is, by far the most popular marque although another Italian called Siorpaes, also from Cortina, constructs a similar style of bob.

Unlike the much heavier *feierabend*, the Podar's are substantially faster and require greater skill in

control. The steering (on all types is rather like a home made soap box with the driver pulling on a pair of cables in order to steer the leading runners. The interior is pretty sparse with just two leather covered seats plus hand grips for the brakeman. Just behind him are two brake leavers, which when pulled upwards, activate a serrated bar which digs itself into the ice as the only method of stopping. The bobs are also articulated in the middle, and have been for the past 10 years.

One of the most important aspects when running a bob is the type of runners you chose. This is a critical factor. Like the wagons on the Cresta, different shapes can be used although the rules applied to bob-sleighbing by the International Federation of Bobbing and Tobogganning (the FIA of bob-sleighbing) are very strict indeed. The actual runners, usually of mild steel, are very heavy and can cost around £100 per set. There are approximately half a dozen varying types which are suitable for different ice temperatures in the same way as tyres can be used in racing.

The weight distribution of the bob is another critical factor. The combined weight for a two man is 375 kilos and this allows 192 kilos for the crew. Weights can be added to the bob if required to assist in the handling characteristics so, as you can see, there are already several facets akin to motor sport.

In preparing myself for several attacks on the course, which thankfully saw the pair of us reach the bottom every time and pointing the right way up (just), kitting up was a fairly straightforward procedure. Crash helmets are naturally compulsory while gloves, an anorak, jeans and goggles are sensible additions. Spiked running shoes aren't allowed but gym shoes with the sole covered with a brush-type finish are mandatory when in competition. Braking on the run, while in competition is also barred as it cuts up the ice.

Fitness is a must if the individual wants to become competitive. "Coolness of temperament, determination and patience" were three facets thrown up by Prince Michael as ideal driver requirements. "Strong shoulders, and legs would help the brakeman, especially if he were a sprinter, a hurdler or even a squash player" he added.

Training facilities, certainly for the British teams, has to be found abroad for unlike the all conquering Germans (from both east and west), Swiss and Austrians, our government does not subsidise our efforts. Whereas a British team is lucky to get in 40 runs a season, usually because the crews are abroad on active service, the Germans can get in as many as 400! That's why we don't win medals. The competition is also much stronger in other countries with something like two to three hundred Swiss and Italians battling for prized places whereas the British, apart from the 10 man team in Innsbruck, only had an additional 30 riders competing for the British championships, this being the fifth year they were held.

The start... before gravity takes the job over.



So you want to go bobbing?

Words to describe what it feels like descending a bob run are difficult to find. Exhilarating, dangerous, breathtaking, whatever cliché you can find could well fit. It has an appeal, an appeal similar to motor racing and that is what drew me. It's very much a team effort with a *camaraderie* not often found within such an upper class sport. Not so, in fact, quite the opposite. It was an illusion totally destroyed.

There are eight bob tracks dotted around the world, six of them in Europe. Igls near Innsbruck will be remembered as the Olympic course which, unlike St Moritz, is artificially refrigerated, meaning a much longer season. Then there's Oberhof in East Germany which has done so much to carry the East Germans to Olympic golds in little over a year. Koenigsee near Salzburg, which is where the West Germans whistle down, Cervinia for the Italians and even Cernaia for the Rumanians. Further afield, Japan has Sapporo while America now has Lake Placid situated near the Canadian border in New York State. Britain therefore has to regard St Moritz as its "home".

The season starts in November and goes on right through until March. In order to compete all



Richard Lloyd—on the run.

you have to do is contact the British Bob-sleigh Association and they are in a position to provide you with Podars and *feierabends*. To progress from the latter you have to be able to descend the run without using the brakes. When you are regarded as competent, you can then move onto the Podars which, should you so desire, are available at around £1500 from the manufacturers. You must remember that such an investment can last you six full seasons of competition.

Providing you are able to reach a suitable standard, trips abroad to compete in international competitions are subsidised to an extent by the BBA. There are also Bob schools which, for around £70, give you a week's tuition which, if you're lucky, can amount to around 30 rides.

This has been a brief insight into what bob-sleighbing entails. To experience it is really down to you.

Clubman's at Nogaro

Peter Evans, the very active secretary of the Clubman's Supersports Register, returned from a visit to France in the middle of last week with some very exciting plans for the Clubman's competitors.

As we hinted a couple of weeks ago he was talking to a French circuit about a Clubman's event and this week comes confirmation of a race at Nogaro with the strong possibility of a second one at Magny Cours a few days later.

The deal was initiated by Nicole Cook, wife of Harrison driver Peter, whose brother is the press officer for the go-ahead Paul Armagnac circuit. Evans went to the circuit to meet M. Davies, who took it over four years ago and claims to have turned it into a good profit making venue.

The deal is that the circuit is putting up £4000 for 15 Clubman's cars to race there on July 11. In fact Evans is hoping to take 20 cars of which it is anticipated that 18 will race. Even after the cost of all the transportation and accommodation it is anticipated that there will be a healthy amount of money left over to give the race itself a prize fund substantially greater than has ever been known in the Formula before, and paying to tenth place.

This will, of course, be the first time Clubman's cars have raced abroad and Evans says that they will find the circuit to be something different as well as it is equipped with many modern facilities like proper changing rooms with showers and so on.

Negotiations haven't been completed yet for a race at Magny Cours on the way home on July 14 (Bastille



Peter Evans — industrious

day) but if they do go through the sponsorship fund will be increased to £6000. In addition Evans is also discussing other sponsorship deals for the trip.

The Nogaro meeting, which will be televised live by French TV, will also have Formula Renault and SEAT events.

Following our story of a couple of weeks ago, Evans has already received no less than 35 applicants for the trip but warns that he will be picking the competitors himself.

Rumour has it that he planned to pick himself, but having looked at his 25 years' worth of racing licences found that he still hadn't got enough signatures for even a national licence!

Kennedy in British FF

David Kennedy, the Irish Formula Ford driver who created a very favourable impression in his home land and at the FF Festival last year, will be contesting the British championship scene this year.

He has arrived in this country with a bus, sponsored by the Brunkard Group Ltd (engineers and inn-keepers) which will house the Crossle 30F (sponsored by Irish G1 racer John Hynes of Group Water Works Ltd), and also act as his office and home for the season.

Rallycross at Lydden

There's more rallycross at Lydden this Sunday when TEAC are organising the second round of the Lydden/TEAC Rallycross championship.

Drivers can score a maximum of 14 points per meeting and after round one Tom Airey leads with 11 from John Button, Dave Potter, 10, and Jack Payne 8. Other entries for Sunday include John Smith, George Warren, Nick Bird, Bruce Bamber, Richard Paighton and John Greasley with his Porsche.

Practice begins at 12.30 and racing at 1.30 pm.



The first marshals' training day at Thruxton took place last Sunday with over 200 people in attendance.

Stringer's win

Steve Stringer from Gillingham took BTD at the Mid Surrey AC's Autotest at Epsom last Sunday, but it might have been a different story if Nick Yoward's Cooper had not stalled on the first test costing him a maximum.

Stringer did the 18 tests in 458.4s to head a field of 31 competitors while Yoward had to be content with second in class on 494.1s, behind a consistent Geoff James who took the class on 477.4s. Only other driver to beat the 500s barrier was Peter Cox who took the big Sprite class in 492.8s beating Alan Rayner's similar car by 15s.

The small Mini class went to Peter Cornwell by a huge margin and Colin Chandler's VW had little opposition in taking its class. With John Carlton taking a major award for best improvement by a Mid Surrey member, John Roseblade was left with the conventional saloons and Peter Draper was streets ahead of Keith Jagger in the up to 1-litre sports cars.

BTD: S. Stringer (Lotus 7), 458.4s. **Class winners:** P. Cornwell (Mini), 549.4s; G. James (Cooper), 477.4s; C. Chandler (VW), 566.0s; J. Roseblade (Mexico), 608.8s; P. Draper (Midget), 558.3s; P. Cox (Midget), 492.8s. **Novice:** (Miss C. Latus (Midget), 734.6s.

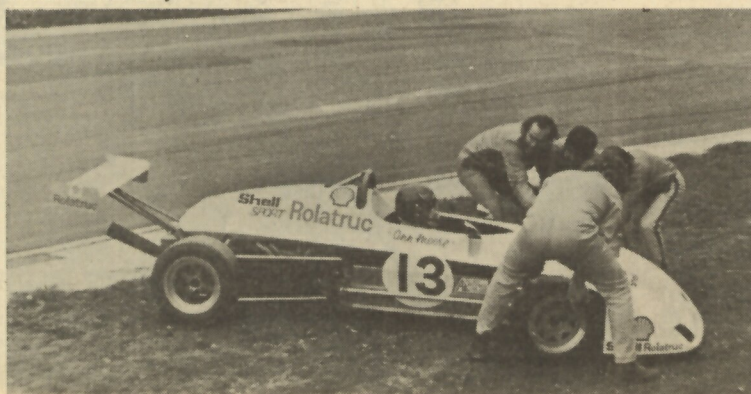
● John Busby, former 750 and F4 racer who turned to FF last year with a Merlyn MkXIA, will be continuing in the Formula this year under the BHP Racing banner although he stresses this is the name of the team and not a sponsor — the latter is still being earnestly sought!

Manitou's G1 BMWs

Two BMW 3.0 si's will be competing in the BBC Radio 1 and Britax production saloon car championships this season under the Manitou banner.

Manitou are the world's largest manufacturers of site lift trucks and the UK branch is based in Hampshire. Drivers for the team will be Derrick Brunt and Graham Miles, managing director of Milbro Industrial Plant Ltd, a Manitou dealer. Both cars will make their debut at Brands Hatch this weekend.

Oops Ann! The lovely Ann Moore was caught out by a drop of rain right at the end of testing at Brands last Sunday. She makes her FF2000 debut at the circuit on Sunday.



Tweaky Monos

The Monoposto Club's excellent *Startline* monthly magazine lets on that a potent two car team is being developed down Woburn Sands way to contest the 1976 Varley Batteries championship.

The cars are for Mike Irons and Paul Thompson and are apparently identical but no details are forthcoming for the moment. Incidentally the Micron which Thompson ran last year is still for sale.

Other Monoposto news is that Brian Toft is building up a new engine for the venerable, yet still beautiful Anco, for this year.

Briefly....

● This year is definitely not Gordon Jackson's, at least when it comes to sporting trials. Last Sunday he caused a real commotion when his car decided to catch fire as he was nudging past a three marker on one of the morning sections on the Colmore.

In a flash the whole competition was forgotten as competitors, marshals et al descended on the hapless Jackson and his passenger who leapt out smartly when the flames appeared.

It was all over very quickly but the electrics were burnt out and a coat of paint will be required in the interim. One bystander was heard to say "Still it makes a change from all the broken diffs he's been suffering."

● Before practice for Sunday's Lydden Rallycross there will be a marshals' fire fighting practice which has been made possible by the £50 collected by Nick Jesty from rallycross drivers last year.

● The Monoposto Racing Club has recently had a change of top personnel as Denis Jenkinson has requested to be listed as a Past President due to pressure of other activities. Frank Tiedman, founder of the club and past holder of all administrative posts, has taken over as president and Barry Simons has joined as vice president. Our own John Bolster continues as Patron.



Nineteen-year-old Jonathan Palmer with his ex-Andy Fraser Marcos which will run with backing from Cooper London Ltd in Modsports this year.

Palmer back in Modsports

Jonathan Palmer, 19 year old Guy's Hospital medical student, who raced a Modsport Frogeye Sprite successfully last year, is moving into the big class this year with the ex-Andy Fraser 3-litre Marcos.

The car is being sponsored by Cooper London Ltd, commercial vehicle contract hire specialists based in Southwark and Bristol. The company runs nearly 200 vehicles and Service Manager Peter Spackman helped to build John Taylor's early cars and will assist with the Marcos.

Palmer, who had two pole positions, one win and four seconds in class during his first season, will be campaigning the distinctive red and white car in the BARC Modsports championship.

Autosprinting at Croft

The Tynemouth and District MC is promoting a new venture at Croft on March 27. The club, which has a history of being a leading racing and rallycross outfit, are moving into the world of Autosprinting with backing from *The Shields Weekly News*.

It is hoped that the entry will draw competitors from the worlds of rallying, racing, autocross, sprinting and hillclimbing.

To give everybody a chance of winning an award there will be 10 classes divided by engine capacity and catering for road going cars, special saloons, standard sports cars, modified sports cars, clubman's and GT cars and single seaters. In addition to class awards there will be other prizes too.

The event will consist of single timed laps of the Croft racing circuit starting from the pit lane and finishing just after the chicane. Competitors will have more than one run and the best will count.

Regulations are available from Martin Liddle at The Clubhouse, Billy Mill Lane, North Shields, NE29 8LP, or Cramlington 2028 (night).

AUTOSPORT, MARCH 4, 1976

Hinley's Trojan

Hillclimber John Hinley, who recently sold his Brabham BT38 to Tony Griffiths, has replaced it with the ex-Keith Holland, ex-Bill Wood F5000 Trojan T101.

He plans to use it to contest the RAC sprint championship and some of the RAC Hillclimb series events. It should be a welcome addition to the big car class of the sprint championship and Hinley is looking forward to giving Dave Harris, Bob Rose and David Render, etc, a good run for their money.

● Gerard Hyland and Patrick Butler jointly share the "Marshal of The Year" Award, presented by the Motor Racing Marshals Club of Ireland for '75. Both assisted at all the Mondello Meetings last season, as well as two days at Phoenix Park, Enniskerry Hillclimb and some autocross events.

Winstanley's Withers BT40

Withers of Winsford, the well known rally car sponsors and accessory people are making their first sortie into the single seater racing world this weekend at Oulton Park. They will be lending their support to local Manchester-area driver David Winstanley, who will be making his debut in the ex-Cyd Williams Brabham BT40 in the opening round of the MCD single seater championship on Saturday.

Further backing for Winstanley comes from John Hogan, a Manchester engineer, and Roosters night club of Nantwich. Last week both car and driver were filmed by Granada TV at Oulton Park and should be featured as a preview to the meeting on Friday.

The Withers team's involvement is a one-off venture at the moment and decision on anything more extensive will be taken after Oulton.

Cathcart/Cockle return to win

Competing in his first road rally for about three years, and really only testing the car in readiness for the Caravan Rally, Lyle Cathcart and Mike Cockle surprised themselves, and a few others, by winning last Saturday night's Chico Rally, run by Maidstone & Mid Kent MC. A fair amount of fog on the 130 mile all Kent route, plus the usual excursions into the dykes on Romney Marsh made the final destination of the awards a little uneasy to forecast and a spectator who got stuck in the mud caused more upsets.

The upset which caused several of the top crews to lose a lot of time came just before TC7 in the Bethesda area. The first two cars, Cathcart and Chris Daisy in an Avenger, got through but then a spectator's car became wedged in the mud, the next car along, Geoff Jackson and Richard Harris, lost 16 minutes and the following half dozen or so crews all dropped around eight minutes.

The organisers had given crews a 35 mile section of pre-plot route at the start instead of selectives and this provided some high speed motoring and some wet feet as well. Among the notables who disappeared into the water were Bob Green/Brian French (Escort TC) and

Rod Johnston/Alan Clark (Mexico), who were leading the ASEMCRRC until they disappeared less than half a mile from the halfway stop.

Biggest "off" was undoubtedly that of Geoff Austin who completely submerged his Cooper S but he rescued Hazel Hayday, his navigator with nothing worse than a complete drenching.

Cathcart and Cockle, in a Victor, dropped 30m to beat Daisy/John McKerrell by 12m and the best semi-experts Brian Deepprose and Malcolm Kirby (Firenza) did extremely well to drop only 44m, beating experts Jackson and Harris on furthest cleanest. Alan Mephram and Mick Town brought a Mexico home in fifth on 47m, the same time as sixth crew Graham Newby and Peter Singleton in their BMW 2002.

The novices category was won by Alan Sampson and Leslie Bain in an Imp who were 16th overall on 58m and the Maidstone and Mid Kent team collected the team award with drivers in first, second and fourth spots.

1. L. Cathcart/M. Cockle (Victor), 30m; 2. C. Daisy/J. McKerrell (Avenger), 42m; 3. B. Deepprose/M. Kirby (Firenza), 44m; 4. G. Jackson/R. Harris (Escort), 44m; 5. A. Mephram/M. Town (Mexico), 47m; 6. G. Newby/P. Singleton (BMW 2002), 47m. **Semi-experts:** Deepprose/Kirby. **Novices:** A. Sampson/L. Bain (Imp), 58m.

Receiver's Knockhill Rallycross

Sad news from North of the Border on Tuesday of this week was that Denys Dobbie's Knockhill circuit was in deep financial trouble.

This Sunday's rallycross, however, will go ahead as planned under the ominous title of Receivers Rallycross.

A statement from the circuit says that it is in a dire financial position and its future depends a great deal on the viability of this weekend's meeting. "The support from the rallycross will decide whether the circuit lives or dies."

Knockhill opened last season and despite efforts to attract good racing and rallycross, spectator support has not really justified the outlay.

There are 42 entries for Sunday's event with all the leading north of England drivers participating. The action starts at 1 pm.

Cheshire team plan spoiled

The Cheshire racing team of Vin Malkie and David Mabbutt, which ran a Chevron B1 in the Clubman's A sport races last year, backed by Taverners Sweets of Liverpool, will be continuing in 1976.

It was originally hoped to run a two car team backed by Taverners under their brand of lollipop called, wait for it, Kojakpops.

Unfortunately Taverners find they can now only back one car occasionally. The new Mallock U2 which had been acquired in anticipation of the forthcoming sponsored season has already been built utilising the engine from the Chevron and it will be driven by Malkie (hopefully with his hair fully restored) at Oulton this Sunday with limited support from the sweetie people.

Susan Tucker-Peake will continue to campaign her Special Saloon Escort this year with sponsorship from Sedan, motor accessory manufacturers.



Kettlewell's points service

Freelance motor racing journalist Mike Kettlewell is again keeping tabs on all the MCD championship points this season. The series' involved are the Tarmac, Shellsport 5000, MCD Open single seater, APG FF2000, Townsend Thoresen FF, MCD FF, Sytner of Nottingham Clubman's, Simoniz, Hitachi and Kent Messenger Special Saloons and

Radio 1 production saloon championships.

Anyone wanting regular bulletins, posted on the Monday following each round, can obtain them for £5.94 (incl VAT) for the first championship and £3.51 for each additional one.

Mike's address is Mill House, Station Road, Eastville, Boston, Lincs PE22 8LS. Tel: New Leake 377.



Frank Sytner — sponsor

Sytner backs MCD Clubman's

The former MCD Clubman's sports championship takes on a new name this week — the Sytner of Nottingham Club Sports Championship. Backing for this, the biggest of the Clubman's championships, comes from former competitor in the class Frank Sytner and his brother Alan, the proprietors of Sytner of Nottingham.

The company is one of the largest specialised car dealerships in the UK and usually has well over half a million pounds worth of stock comprising BMW, Porsche, Mercedes and Jaguars.

The Sytner championship will solely be for A class Clubman's cars with fully modified 1600cc engines and the financial rewards will be almost three times greater than the comparable championship last year.

Prize money will be £150 per race allocated at £6 per point on a scale of 9-6-4-3-2-1 for the first six places. All 16 rounds will count.

Sytner himself will not be contesting the championship having moved on to FF2000 with a Dulon under the Ken Hensley Racing banner.

Qualifying rounds for the championship are:

Mar 6, Oulton Park; Mar 28, Snetterton; Apr 16, Oulton Park; Apr 19, Mallory Park; May 2, Brands Hatch; May 9, Thruxton; May 30, Brands Hatch; May 31, Mallory Park; June 13, Brands Hatch; Aug 1, Silverstone; Aug 8, Thruxton; Aug 15, Snetterton; Aug 29, Mallory Park; Sep 26, Brands Hatch; Oct 16, Oulton Park; Oct 24, Mallory Park.

Snetterton RX positions

After the February 22 event, the second round of the Winter Series, the Snetterton Rallycross Championship is being led by Nick Garner's Solihull Motors 870 Mini, despite his being beaten to the class win on the day by Roger Burn's Clan. Only one point behind Garner's total of 36 points come local rally driver Chris Gamble and Welshman George Warren in their vastly different Escorts.

Class positions: Rally cars: 1. Chris Gamble (1.8 Ford Escort), 35; 2. Keith Webb (1.7 Ford Escort) and Stan Rolfe (1.3 Mini 'S'), 30.

Up to 1000cc class: 1. Nick Garner (870 Mini), 36; 2. Bruce Male (1.0 BMC Mini), 34; 3. Roger Burn (1.0 Clan Crusader), 24.

1001 to 1400cc class: 1. Richard Painton (1.4 Mini Cooper 'S'), 31; 2. Keith Stones (1.3 Mini Clubman), 28; 3. John Winsor (1.4 Mini Clubman), 26.

Over 1400cc class: 1. George Warren (2.1 Ford Escort-BDA), 35; 2. Peter Harrold (2.3 Volkswagen), 28; 3. Dave Fuell (2.0 Ford Escort-BDA), 25.

Alford's TVR

Further to our prodsports news story last week Chris Alford has come back into the news again this week in that he has been offered a works TVR 1600M to drive on occasions this season. The car has been offered by TVR's Martin Lilley so that Alford can establish a lap time for the car in standard form to evaluate its competitiveness against the Morgan 4/4s, MGBs, etc.

Alford says that if the car looks as though it will be better than his Morgan his employers, John Britten Garages, may well do a deal to run the car as they just happen to be TVR agents as well as Morgan. As the Morgan isn't ready, the first appearance of the TVR in Alford's hands will be at Croft this weekend.

Griffiths buys Cramer March

The 1974 Woking Motors/RAC Leaders Hillclimb Champion, Martyn Griffiths has sold the two 5-litre McLaren M10Bs in which he gained 10th place in last year's RAC Hillclimb Championship and bought the March 74B which has been campaigned for the past two years by Chris Cramer under the Grunhale Lager banner. Chris, who also won the Leaders Championship in 1970 and 1972, took the 2-litre Hart engined March into third place in the RAC Championship in 1974 and then with the engine "stretched" to 2.2 litres went on to achieve second place in 1975. Martyn Griffiths will again be sponsored by Kidderminster-based Severn Advertising, of which he is an executive director. First time out for the March in its new house colours of blue and white will be at the Loton Park Members' Test Day on March 21.

Biba team



At last another chance to use this picture! News comes this week that Valli will race her prodsport Midget in a team with Chris Meek's Europa backed by Biba Cosmetics.

Morris back

John Morris will again be contesting the BRSCC Ford Escort Challenge in 1976 with backing from Morris Vulcan Ltd (no relation), toy manufacturers, from Solihull.

As in 1975 the engine will be prepared by Graham Eden of Formula Atlantic fame and the car will be maintained by Andy Bull of Kenilworth Motor Racing Services Ltd.

Morris Vulcan, who will be promoting their range of roller skates on the car, have plans to enter Morris on the Texaco Tour of Britain as well but in another car.

Richard Piper was putting in some impressive times at both Silverstone and Brands last week in the FF2000 Sark (né Starfire).



Briefly . . .

● The Motor Racing Marshals Club (South) held a drivers' forum on February 27 with Divina Galica, Tim Schenken, Howden Ganley, Terry Sanger, Henry Liddon, Phil Winter and Richard Longman attending at Devizes football club. More than 200 marshals and enthusiasts were present for a very successful evening.

● Nigel Haywood, proprietor of the Sheffield based Haywood Roadspeed Ltd and Merlyn Mk29 owner-driver, has been appointed a Merlyn agent and will be carrying spares to FF races in his part of the world.

● The mysterious Brazilian who will drive a works supported FF Van Diemen this year is now revealed as Mario Ferreira Nato, ex-kart and FV champion. His first race will be at Silverstone on March 14.

● TEAC are planning a Clubman's B sport feature race at their May 9 Snetterton meeting and if sufficient entries are gathered it may be of a slightly longer distance than usual. TEAC's Ken Kaye has the details on Southend-on-Sea 558030.

● The Formula Junior Lotus 20 campaigned last year in the Monoposto club races by Colin Bower has been bought by Geoff Riggs from Devon.

● New vice-chairman of the RAC Rallies Committee is Jim Porter.

● Martin Barnard now represents autocross on the RAC Speed Events Committee in place of Andy Thwaite.

● Good news on the Mondello Park scene — despite all the spate of bad rumours of its impending closure, the Irish racing season will be opened on March 17, with the IMRC's traditional St Patrick's Day outing, for which regs are now available.

County series looking good

The Jaybrand Racewear Silverstone League, Robert Fearnall's tremendous idea of getting all the local counties interested in racing (13 all within a 50 mile radius of Silverstone), has its first round on March 14 with competitors from Clubman's and Formula Ford representing their respective localities.

Sixty-five drivers will be representing the counties and the industrious Fearnall has produced detailed biographies of all the competitors to feed the county media which are involved — just another example of how the competitors are being looked after this year.

Bedfordshire is a lucky county as it has adopted South Africans Rad Dougall and Trevor von Rooyen while Berkshire looks strong with Creighton Brown and Nick Adams from Clubman's. Numerically Hertfordshire has the strongest representation but with the Peter Evans in their team ... chances of getting beyond the bar seem slim. Most of the counties in fact are well represented and Silverstone are keeping in with their landlords with the arrival of top FF Irishmen Derek Daly and Bernard Delvany within Northamptonshire's boundaries. Our tip for first round honours goes to Oxfordshire (the editor's home county ... he promises not to race) with David Heale, Steve Russell and Martin Young to score the points.

Demon Tweeks bonuses

Demon Tweeks, the Tattenhall, Cheshire, based firm run by Alan Minshaw, is to operate a bonus scheme to competitors displaying their stickers in racing and rallying this year.

The bonuses will be available to competitors in the RAC Touring Car Championship, the Simoniz Special Saloon Car Championship and the Pirelli/Triple C Clubman rally championship. Points will be awarded in each class on a 5-4-3-2-1 basis to all competitors carrying the required

stickers. The highest points scorer in each championship, irrespective of class, will receive £100, £50 and £25 for the first three places.

Demon Tweeks are also offering a further 10% discount off their trade price list to all competitors in the scheme.

Drivers wishing to involve themselves in the scheme should send an SAE to Demon Tweeks, Gateshead Smith, Tattenhall, Nr Chester, as soon as possible for an enrolment form.

Julian Fack the easy winner

The Semperit sponsored Sporting Trials Championship moved to pleasant pastures near Stow-on-the-Wold last Sunday when Julian Fack scored his second win of the season in his Impunity. A final round in which he dropped only eight marks on the 11 sections made him a worthy winner on 56 marks, 10 fewer than John Benson who crowned a good day with his Jabs by claiming the second lowest score on the final tour.

With Ron Kemp and Tony Harrison behind the course layout, sections were tough and tight. Early on the dampness caused quite a heavy loss of marks and at the end of the first round John and Julian Fack led the field on 31 marks. Benson had already started well and was on 37 marks along with Jack Pearce (Kin-

craft). Charles Pollard had his Kincraft handily placed in fourth on 40 marks and three drivers, Bill Warr (Bilbo), Ivor Portlock (Driad) and Robin Alexander (Facsimile) were all on 41 marks.

Pearce dropped only eight on the second round to become joint leader with John Fack on 47 marks. Julian was third on 48 marks followed by Benson, Pollard and Portlock.

On the final round Pearce threw it all away with two careless climbs, brushing high penalty markers on sections which he romped up and he was down to fourth. John Fack could not maintain the momentum and was demoted to third.

1. Julian Fack (Impunity), 56 marks; 2. J. Benson (JABS), 66 marks; 3. John Fack (Impunity), 71 marks; 4. J. Pearce (Kincraft), 74 marks; 5. C. Pollard (Kincraft), 79 marks; 6. I. Portlock (Driad), 88 marks.

Championship: 1. Pearce 114 marks; 2. Julian Fack 107 marks.

Status in rallycross

Enter the Status. Peter Banham gave this new Mini based car its competition debut at Snetterton on Feb 22 and impressed many with its neat handling and performance. Only the third of its type to be produced by the Wymondham, Norfolk based firm of Status, it is an all fibre glass car designed to take Mini components, Banham's car being fitted with a fairly standard 1275cc engine. Completed after the usual all-nighter the car was being run-in at Sunday's Snetterton Rallycross, although to watch Banham one could hardly believe it. A full season of Stage Rallies and Autocrosses are planned for the neat little car.

Skoda wins

The Skoda Combi of Coventry & Warwicks member Stephen Courts was almost unstoppable at Dunsley, near Stourport last Sunday and easily won the Kidderminster CC production car trial from an entry of 31. Courts dropped four marks on 32 sections to win on Index of Performance but the day's lowest score went to D. Cakebread who dropped only two marks in his Imp.

Ian Spencer had no difficulty in winning the Mini class, watched by his distinguished father, dropping 45 marks to beat the class runner-up by 25 marks. R. Taylor took the conventional saloon class in a Skoda saloon on 15 marks and after a close fight Malcolm Brown edged out Reg Bradbury in the battle of the Sprites by a single mark.

Overall: S. Courts (Skoda Combi), 4 marks. Class winners: I. Spencer (Cooper), 45 marks; R. Taylor (Skoda), 15 marks; M. Brown (Sprite), 5 marks; D. Cakebread (Imp), 2 marks.

Drag racer Alan Herridge in pleasant company as he receives the 1975 Funny Car Driver of Year Trophy at the BDRHRA Champions Trophy Night last week.



New Centaur

Richard Scott of Centaur Engineering in Halesworth, Suffolk, who has built a successful range of club cars over the last ten years has recently announced his latest model the Mk15B. This is the production model of the Mk15 versions which have been built for B sport Clubman's competitor Peter Clark and A sport man David Childs. Clark's car will use Wolftrace wheels and will in fact run in their silver livery.

The first two production cars will be going to Centaur stalwart Ian Mitchell and Peter Green, who already has a Mk14B. Both will use the cars in Clubman's B sport.

Further cars will be built during the year and existing Mk14 chassis can be updated to the Clark/Childs spec, which is basically narrow track and overall refinement.

Briefly . . .

● A slight misunderstanding led to our story on Derek Daly's Van Dieman drive last week indicating that the Irishman had gone quicker than Kenny Gray had ever done at Snetterton. Gray, of course, is the Snetterton lap record holder and the instance referred to was when Daly equalled Gray's time on a slower day altogether. Apologies all round.

● Early arrivals for Lydden's Rallycross on Sunday will be able to wander round the Sunday Market which will have over 50 stalls in the public enclosure.

● Vernon Davies, the flying Welsh Clubman's driver has rebuilt his U2 to Mk16 specification and come reasonably up to date on tyres for 1976 but is in desperate need of some financial and physical assistance for the year.

● The Clubman's race at Brands Hatch on April 4 will not count for the Sytner championship as originally intended. It will, however, be a non-championship event for Class A cars only although prize money will be approximately the same.

● John Haynes, Irish autocross and test trials driver and occasional saloon racer, is going FF 1600 this season with a Crossle 16F.

● Arthur Collier, Irish competitor in Superloos racing with the ex-John Turner 5.0 Sloda-Chevy, is sticking to the class this year — and he should be quicker having had some personal lightness added in the form of an appendix removal in Dublin's Adelaide Hospital last week.

● Frank Keane, former Sexton Trophy winner and IMRC committee member, will return to the hills with the ex-John L'Amie Crossle 22F. His company, Motor Import Ltd (Irish importers of BMW), will sponsor a new Irish hillclimb championship to the tune of £250. Frank has retired from racing, and will concentrate solely on hillclimbs and sprints.

● Stories that three times Sexton Trophy winner and Irish Super-sports star Richie Heeley is going Atlantic this year are totally unfounded. He is undecided about his plans but will probably stick with his Gryphon C73/4 and do some of the hills as well as the Mondeflo meetings. With Heeley Motors recently appointed Ford Main Dealers, for North Co Dublin, he could well do some Group 1 racing with a Mark 2 RS2000.

● Forty-five miles of stage, mainly forests, are offered on the Tour of Cumbria Rally on April 4. Start of the 175 mile route will be Whitehaven with a finish at Kirkbride. Up to 150 crews, at £25 each, will be accepted and regs are available from G. Ousby, Gleaston Hall, Gleaston, Ulverston, or J. Stairs, 36 Hurley Road, Little Corby, Carlisle.

● Former quick Formula Ford racer from Halifax John Woodcock has been unable to raise the finance to continue in the category this year and will instead be contesting the Mini 1275 GT championship. Money is so short that he says, "testing and development will comprise pushing the car out of the garage on to the trailer."

● Former Canadian Formula Ford Champion Rod Bremner will be the works FF1600 Crossle driver this year.

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